

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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WE OF ADAM'S CLAY

By Cosmo Hamilton

LITTLE MRS. BLUNDELL—the beautiful Betty Blundell—addressed her envelope to Captain Evelyn Blundell, R.N., before she commenced her letter, which, in itself, proves that little Mrs. Blundell is no different from ninety-nine women out of a hundred.

"My very ownest hubby-man," she wrote, in her ridiculously pretty backward hand, with her fair, small head on one side, her lips pursed up, her blue eyes slightly closed, "my very ownest hubby-man, so you have got leave to come back to your lonely little wife at last, after three of the longest, dullest, most unhappy, most perfectly beastly years she has ever spent! Hurrah, once, hurrah, twice, hurrah, three times, and one more hurrah for luck! I can't tell you how delighted and how excited I am. I feel that if I were just an ordinary woman I should dash off and buy something I couldn't afford, or go in for a course of face-massage, or have my hair waved by a Paris specialist. But, then, I'm not, you know, darling, am I? The next six weeks will seem longer, even, than the longest of these three years, each of which has been an age in itself. My dear old boy, how brown and bearded and tobaccoey you will be, won't you? And how you will purr, and rub your daily thinning head against your poor little missus's shoulder! (How many esses in missus's? I don't know!)

"Darling, I have done as you asked me to do. It was rather a wrench to leave town and the few friends who helped to keep me bright and cheerful. But I love my man, oh, so dearly, dearie—you know that, don't you?—

and I have let the flat for the rest of the Summer to my old chum, Milly Cator, who knows you. She's not lovely, but she's very jolly and very trustworthy.

"Also, like the best little wife in the world—and I am, aren't I, darling?—I have got exactly the rooms you described in which we are to spend our honeymoon number two. I'm sitting in one of them now, having arrived this afternoon in time for tea. You wanted to be five miles from any station. Well, this is ten. You pined to be in the midst of wild, solitary country, where the abominable swish of the sea is never heard. Very well, this is idiotically and insanely wild—almost dangerously so—as solitary as Bond street in August, and nearly as green as a certain Evelyn used to be if I ever danced twice in succession with any other man. Do you remember those dear, dear days?

"Of course, there is the usual village two miles off, which has the usual complement of Red Lions, Cats and Fiddles, and Rising Suns. And there is the usual green, whose daisies scraggy horses eat, never seeming to grow any less scraggy. Of course, there are the usual generally bootless children, with siren voices and neglected noses; the usual old men, *sans* teeth, *sans* eyes, *sans* everything; the usual women with curvature of the spine from so constantly bending over the furrows.

"No one has ever even heard of the sea—at least, they look as though they hadn't, which is pretty nearly the same thing. And I don't *think* there is a Salvation Army. I didn't hear anything of it as I drove through in a

buggy which ought to have been a dog-cart, drawn by a horse which ought to have been a pony. At any rate, you may make your mind easy as to shops, for there is a boot-maker, a tallow-chandler, a postmaster, a fly-paper merchant, a fishmonger, an oil-man, a sweet-stuff manufacturer, a linen-draper, a tailor, a green-grocer, a baker, a tobacconist, and a butcher—his name is Winship, and let me warn you against knocking your head as you go in, down three wooden steps—and please see that you don't tread on the kittens.

"There is no bath-room here—do you mind my babbling on, darling? It's the next best thing to talking to you, which is the best thing in the whole wide world—but they tell me there is a hose, and that our nearest neighbor is a farmer a mile away.

"The good people are as good as usual, though not a whit better, have acres of kitchen garden, two children—boy and girl—a grandmother, a wire-haired terrier, who, or which, has its chin on my foot at this moment, and a great collection of pigs somewhere about.

"They are open-eyed at all my luggage—I mean the good people, not the pigs!—have never had lodgers before, have never been to London—though the good woman's brother is a plumber at Whitechapel, with twins and bronchitis—have no piano, no books, and nothing to read save a well-selected collection of texts, which hang in clusters over my bed. So far, I have committed murder only once, and that was superfluous, as it was merely a lady-bird. I am not much of a naturalist yet.

"By the way, did I tell you our nearest neighbor is a farmer a mile away? How I am going to kill time until you come, I can't conceive! You know how I hate the country. I think I shall sit under a tree all day, and imagine that your head is on my knee. At any rate, I shall attend every service at the village church, to pray that nothing may happen to my dearest husband.

"And so, good-bye, darling. I shall write to you at the various places you say you will call at on your homeward voyage, and with all my love, every little bit of it, now and forever,

"Your own,

"BETTY.

"P. S.—Hurry, hurry, hurry, 'cos I wants yer mighty badly, yes, I does, I does, I do!"

II

"MY DARLING MILLY:

"Before I do anything else, I feel I must write and thank you for being such a brick. If you hadn't taken my flat just when you did, old girl, I should have been regularly in the proverbial cart. But, of course, having been away, you don't know the circumstances which led to my being obliged to evacuate the untenable position, do you? Well, I'll tell you, if you will swear by all you hold sacred—if there is anything in the world you *do* hold sacred—to tear this letter up, directly you have read it.

"You remember, before you went away at the beginning of the season, Reggie Rawnsley bringing a man named Worthing—Valentine Worthing—to the flat to tea? Do you? The man with the face of a Greek god, and the body of a satyr, whom we had both noticed when he represented Cupid at the carnival at Prince's? That tea was the first of many teas, many dinners, many suppers. You know I always liked books I couldn't understand, and people—by people I mean men—it was impossible to see through at the first glance. I liked Valentine for that very reason. He puzzled me. I couldn't make out whether he knew nothing or everything. When I looked at his beautiful face, so open, so frank, so regular, so unlined, so—but it isn't the word I want—innocent, and then glanced down at his almost humped back, his claw-like hands, his withered little legs, I felt bound to get at the bottom of him, to study him, to find out to the last inch just what manner of man he was.

"I dropped Reggie Rawnsley, but it was more difficult than I thought. The silly boy said his heart would break, and told me I had made him loathe women—how absurd that every young man should say the same thing under the same circumstances!—and concentrated my attention on Valentine Worthing. When I look back upon the duel we fought, my heart palpitates as though I had been fool enough to run a mile. I retired from the world, gave up all engagements, and spent my days at the flat, and my evenings at places where society doesn't congregate. We were inseparable. He would be with me about midday, half an hour after his advance guard, preceded by a florist's shop-load of flowers. Till six o'clock he would sit at the piano, playing the most exquisite airs to me, and singing little strange, pathetic songs that crept into my veins and filled me with electricity, and made me cry like a baby. If he ever spoke—and he rarely did speak—he would say simple, boyish, enthusiastic things about art and literature and religion—the kind of things one can imagine a convent girl saying. Then, about six o'clock every evening he would climb off the music-stool, give a great sigh, touch my hand almost reverently with the tips of his fingers, and go home to dress.

"At eight o'clock the bell would ring, and I would go down and find him waiting for me in his brougham, scented and curled, no longer the Greek god, but an old, blasé man, with leering eyes, and a keen, witty, blasphemous, epigrammatic tongue. And we would dine together, and go to some out-of-the-way music-hall, and then have supper. During the whole time he would never cease talking, tearing every good, old-fashioned thing to shreds, heaping ridicule on chastity, faith, love, honesty; pouring scorn on the idea of a future life, and gradually filling me with dread, loathing and contempt.

"Then he would drive me home, stand for a moment gripping my hand in both his own, looking at me

with eyes in which there was a kind of lurking sneer, and then leave me—trembling, limp, disgusted, with all my flesh cockled, as though a bat had touched my mouth with its wing.

"Every night, I determined I would never see him again; I even went so far ten or eleven times as to tell Jane on no account to let him come in again. But, every morning, he sent flowers with some little, simple, respectful greeting written upon a card, and, filled with curiosity to see what his mood would be, I would tell Jane to let him in the moment he arrived. And so it went on. Every day, he would play and sing, and make me cry; every night, he would fill me with nausea. And the extraordinary thing about him was that when he disgusted and frightened me most, then was his fascination most strong. But, at last, it had to end.

"One night, coming home in his carriage—Pouf! I can't write it; it makes me sick—even me! At any rate, when I got home I changed, packed up all my things, left the keys with Jane, and caught the workman's train—they must have taken me for a madwoman, although I own I looked awfully sweet, with a most becoming pallor on my cheeks, and my eyes wide open, and *very* blue—to Uxbridge.

"I waited at a hotel till a respectable time of day, and then drove over to my father-in-law's place, some miles out. He is a dean, you know, and most ridiculously rural. I thought that, if I put myself, metaphorically speaking, upon a diet of beer, the constant taste of absinthe would disappear.

"And then I got Evelyn's letter, in which he said he was coming home, and, of course, that was a blow. I did think he was pretty sure to give me another free year. However, I mustn't grumble. The three years he has been away have been the happiest years of my life. Do you remember my saying to you two minutes after he had left the house—his eyes were full of tears—as soon as I was able to stop sobbing, that I should live every

moment of my life till he came back? My goodness, Milly, I have lived them, too, I have!

"You really were a dear to take the flat, directly I wired to you. Evelyn wanted me to get rooms in some very quiet country place, and wait for him for the honeymoon number two. (Goodness, how I laughed!) And here I am in about the most benighted, God-forgotten place upon the map, I verily believe. Of course, it's very lovely, and all that, but you know my idea of scenery—the sky-line of the Knightsbridge houses, as seen any morning from the Row. Really, I shouldn't have left town at all, but for Valentine Worthing.

"What I am going to do to kill time here I can't conceive. There is not even a resident parson in the place! There is, I am glad to hear, a farmer living a mile away. Perhaps, only perhaps, he may be worth studying. Well, ta-ta, old girl! I'll let you know how I get on. In six weeks' time all fun will be at an end, and I shall no longer be a—is free-agent a good word?

"Yours,
"BETTY."

III

LITTLE Mrs. Blundell threw her pen down, rose, and stretched herself, yawning in a bored way, yawning as a martyr yawns.

For a moment, she stood in the middle of the little, slanting-ceilinged room, upon the square patch of hideously cheap carpet, and tried to imagine that she could hear the never-ending hansom jingling by, the sound of the shrill, impatient cab whistle, the jolting of omnibus wheels, the nasal voices of brisk tradesmen, the cockney twitterings of sparrows. And, with closed eyes, she tried to see the misshapen figure of Valentine Worthing perched upon a piano, flooding the air with minor chords, and piercing her heart with his plaintive notes. For a moment, with her arms flung out, her head thrown back, her eyes spark-

ling with excitement and dare-devilry, she tried to persuade herself that her husband had only a moment ago left her for three years—that for three long, delightful, unhampered years the world, the hitherto unexplored world, was hers to discover.

In the garden behind, a baby started crying, and reality forced its huge, hob-nailed boot into the door, and drove make-believe ignominiously out of the window. Before the baby had been hushed and soothed into silence, Mrs. Blundell's eyes were hard and discontented again.

It was all so quiet, so unexciting, so lethargic. In the place of all the dear familiar noises of London, there were only to be heard the soothing swish of the blades of corn rubbing shoulders under the gentle hand of the breeze; the quiet cooing of doves on the roof; the distant music of sheep-bells playing an unaccompanied quartet; the occasional crowing of some egotistical cock, and the murmur of admiration from the hens who formed his harem; the bumpings and dumpings of a bustling housewife about the kitchen below; the happy growlings of a bunch of puppies biting one another's ears; the intermittent song of a boy digging in the kitchen-garden; the all-pervading murmur of the Midsummer bee.

But above all these irritating sounds, there was one which got upon Betty Blundell's nerves until she felt like screaming or breaking something. It was the regular hush-hush-hush which came into the window at the other end of the room, the window which looked out upon the placid garden of the cottage.

For a moment, she stood listening to it, wondering what idiot could be doing it. Then, as it continued with almost the regularity of the swinging of a pendulum, she gave a gasp of anger, and, with the blood eddying about her brain, hurried across the room to the window to shout at the person who could be doing it only to upset her already tingling nerves.

With her beautiful face distorted with irritation, Betty put her head out

of the open window, flinging aside the screen of honeysuckle which hung down over it.

Leaning anxiously over a cradle, her young eyes filled with maternal concern, looking down at the flushed and creased face of a great baby boy, stood a little, rough-shod girl of nine or ten. Her lips were wide apart, "hushing" loudly, as, with both hands, she dandled the cradle to and fro, beating time with one of her feet.

The lines of irritation gradually died out of Betty's face, and an expression of great interest came instead. With intense curiosity, she watched every movement the little girl made, noted every look that came into her eyes; how, after vigorously "hushing" for a quarter of an hour, she suddenly bent over the baby's face, and while still rocking the cradle as regularly as ever, listened eagerly to its breathing; how, apparently not quite satisfied that sleep had come, she touched, still rocking, but more gently now, the lids of the baby's eyes with the tips of her finger; how, with fierce eyebrows and threatening eyes, she raised a peremptory finger to one of the pups which, tumbling heels over head out of the house, made a wobbly dash toward her; and how, finally, "hushing" no longer, she stopped the rocking of the cradle, gave a tender touch to the blanket about the baby's ears, and crept quietly, standing still every now and then to listen, into the house.

"How extraordinary it is!" said Betty to herself. "She couldn't be more patient if the thing were her own. I wonder why I wasn't born a mother like that little country girl. Fancy me, a mother!"

IV

SUDDENLY, Betty Blundell's expression of settled boredom changed to one of wide-awake surprise and curiosity.

The bow-window in the front room, into which she had returned, peered through thickly climbing roses

into the road. Along this road, swung one of the highest, broadest-shouldered, biggest-footed, best-looking men little Mrs. Blundell had ever seen.

As he came level with the window, his profile, slightly shaded by a dark tweed cap, stood out in clean-cut strength against the unclouded sky. As he moved, always with the same long, well-oiled stride, a pair of keen eyes scanned every other blade of rapidly yellowing corn with pride, affection and paternal anxiety.

Betty ran to the door quickly.

"Mrs. Weeks, Mrs. Weeks!" she cried.

From the distance came the sound of a flat-iron dropped, with evident fluster upon its metal stand, followed by a shuffling of heavy feet.

"Mrs. Weeks!"

"Yes'm."

The voice, oily and deferential, and filled with concern, came from the narrow, winding stairs.

"Come quickly! I want to speak to you."

Mrs. Blundell had thrown the window higher, had moved the bamboo table away, and was leaning out, framed in roses.

With panting breath, and with her apron twisted around her plump, bare arms, Mrs. Weeks hurried in.

"Mrs. Weeks," said little Mrs. Blundell, her voice vibrating with excitement, "come to the window quickly, look out to the right, and tell me who that gentleman is."

Flushed, billowy, shiny, Mrs. Weeks did as she was bid. Almost at once she drew in her head, turning a hearty laugh into a respectful cough.

"That be no genelman, ma'am. That be just furrmurr."

"Do you mean the usual kind of thing?"

"Same's always, ma'am."

"Do you mean a man who grows potatoes and cabbages, and all that?"

"An' corn, an' burreley, an' oererts," said Mrs. Weeks, with her Sunday smile, "an' that loike, that's it, ma'am." Then, drawing her muscular, sunburnt

arm from beneath its hiding-place, she pointed out of the window. "That's 'is corn opposite, an' 'is furrm's down the road." Whereupon, suddenly remembering that her arm was bare, she murmured a confused apology, blushed painfully, giggled, and thrust the member out of sight again.

Mrs. Blundell had said, "Really! Dear me!" in a vacant, polite way, and had gone back to the window.

With her dainty elbows on the sill, she leaned her chin on both her hands, and the clustering roses, tumbling into bloom over one another, scrambled to touch her hair. Her blue eyes followed the swinging figure of the big, muscular man until, passing between the two fields of corn which waved their heads toward him with affectionate deference, he grew smaller and smaller, became a smudge, a stain, a speck upon the enormous golden sea, and disappeared.

Round Mrs. Blundell's delicate mouth there crept a tinge of a smile. In her eyes, a growing expectation and curiosity mingled with relief and surprise.

"Oh, thanks, very much, Mrs. Weeks," she said, putting stamps on her letters with an amount of care and precision which was almost irritating. "I thought I should just like to know, you know. I like to take an interest in every one who happens to live near me. I beg your pardon—Ashley is his name? Really, beyond just how-d'ye-do, and that kind of thing, he has not spoken to you for fifteen years! To whom does he speak, then? Nobody! Really! But he goes to London sometimes, I suppose? Not even once a year? Dear me, what a quaint person! Never once left the village, eh? Really! Married, and that kind of thing, I suppose? No? Then, who looks after him? . . . Really? Surely she must be blind and deaf if she's as old as that? . . . Your aunt? I beg your pardon. How very nice for him! No relations? How very sad! But I suppose he makes farming pay, if he works so hard? Yes, I should think so, too. But what does

he do with his money if he never goes away? . . . Buys books? Yes? And gives pensions to all the people in the village? Does he, really? What an exceedingly interesting and curious person, Mrs. Weeks."

She laughed a ripple of effortless laughter, and, half turning her back to her landlady, commenced touching things on the bamboo, in the way civilized women have of letting one know that they have had enough of one. With that peculiar instinct which is born and not bred in women, Mrs. Weeks murmured that her iron would be getting cold, and made her way to the door.

"Oh, and Mrs. Weeks, I should like tea about nine o'clock, in a nice, big pot. The dinner was excellent. I am just going for a little walk."

The heavy, pleased, fat steps of Mrs. Weeks sounded on the stairs. In the kitchen below began the deep rumble of a man's voice, the noise of a poker being thrust into a fire, and the pattering of children's feet upon the red-tiled floor. Without, the sparrows chattered in the ivy, a quiet breeze rubbed the leaves of the rose-trees together, the distant tinkle of a sheep-bell floated imperceptibly by.

Little Mrs. Blundell put her letters into the pocket of an expensively simple muslin frock, and crossed the sloping floor of her oak-beamed sitting-room, into her bedroom. She emerged from it after quite a little while, with a smile on her lips, and a very clever poppy-covered hat upon a head of hair which rivaled the ripest corn.

"No," she said, aloud, standing on a chair to get a full-length glimpse of herself in the square of cheap looking-glass over the narrow mantelpiece, "no, I don't fancy it will be so difficult to kill time here, after all."

And then, with her sweet face glowing, her eyes dancing, and carrying her head slightly on one side, like an analytical chemist starting on a new experiment, Betty Blundell tripped down-stairs, and took the turning to the right.

V

MANY times a day, during the thirty-odd years of his outlandish life, had John Ashley passed along the road which ran, under the best-parlor window of Mrs. Weeks's cottage, from his farm to the village, at first, on a wiry, electrical pony, or with quick, eager, boyish steps; later, on a stout, unpretentious mare of slate-roofed hue, or with the steady, long, set-teeth swing which had brought something of the devil into Mrs. Blundell's big blue eyes.

No one had ever seen John Ashley driving. Some there were who said that it was because he considered it an invalid's mode of traveling; others, that his dog-cart was too shabby.

Only John Ashley knew the reason. He could not forget an evening, twelve years before, when his father, with slow drips of blood falling into the snow through a stained shirt tied about his head, had been carried into the house, for his son to sit dumbly and stare at before he was taken to a far more permanent and comfortable roof-tree in the shadow of the willow.

Since then alone, sometimes restlessly, impatiently, but always to the letter, his life had been spent in the carrying out of a promise made to his father a few nights before his death—a promise never to leave the village on any pretense, unless bound to do so on account of ill-health or misfortune.

He had, not unnaturally, asked his father the reason, before he gave his word. His father had set his glass down quickly, as though his arm had suddenly lost its strength. "Because," he had answered, "in the country there are few men and women, and many trees. Trees tell no lies, and do not rob one of one's wife. Trees are our friends, whose sympathy and confidence are not false. Trees are the only Christians God gives life to—except dogs. In towns there are few trees, and many men and women. You will be safe only in the country."

After his father's death, the reasons why he had asked this promise of his son were found carefully stated in an

envelope marked "Private." In language so restrained, so almost Biblical, as to emphasize more strongly the agony of the man as he wrote, the story was told—the usual story of his friend's treachery, his wife's dishonor, his own broken heart, his consequent disbelief in humanity. His wife had married him for love; wherefore, there being no such thing as love among men and women, he had fled to his trees. So it came to pass that John Ashley, at thirty-odd years of age, had never left his village. During the first seventeen of these years his father had steeped his mind in literature; had bred in him a love of nature which was now almost passionate; had taught him the cultivation of land, the rearing of live-stock; had been, indeed, his mother, sister, brother, friend, school-master, playmate, nurse.

Nature, his books, his fields, his animals and his memory, had been Ashley's only companions since his father's death. For twelve years, he had spoken merely to his farm-hands, to other farmers, to buyers, to his old pensioners in the village, and the few villagers themselves. He had never seen a woman of his own class.

With her characteristic nimbleness of mind, the beautiful Betty Blundell had filled in the spaces between the lines of information she had drawn from Mrs. Weeks. John Ashley was new. The study of a new thing, when it was male, was always interesting to her. The study of John Ashley would keep boredom, the worst of all evil spirits, at arm's length.

So little Mrs. Blundell, who hated walking, took the turning to the right.

VI

SHE followed the corn-lined road until, within a quarter of a mile from the village, it ran up a hill. Here, she branched off the road into a field, tree-topped, where there was a gap. Looking down upon a clump of irregular red roofs, grouped, chicken-wise, under the wing of their mother church,

she stopped, tired, expectant, amused and resourceful.

The sun was setting. There was a sudden hush in the world. A solitary crow, flying quickly, left a harsh jar in the air. The silver tongue of the ancient church, wailing the death of one hour, singing the birth of another, instantly corrected it. That was all. The whole sky seemed to have been slashed at with a sharp knife. From under the surface of it, there welled up streaks of blood which trickled about the cuts, staining everything a deep crimson. Insidiously, the trees became tinted with it, the weeds, and bracken, and shaking grass, the thin white line of road, the corn on either side. The windows of the church and of the cottages in the village suddenly flared as though the rooms they lighted were on fire.

Little Mrs. Blundell saw none of this. Shading her eyes with a delicate little hand, she watched the road below, steadily, eagerly, impatiently.

A speck on the white appeared, turned into two, grew into a tired horse and a weary man, and left the road for a meadow on the left. Then, nothing.

Another speck! Little Mrs. Blundell bent forward as though to give her eyes less distance to peer through. The silver bell marked off another quarter. A quick smile came suddenly to Betty's face. She could now recognize the height, the breadth, the slow, swinging stride of the man placed upon earth to amuse her until the novelty of him wore off, or until it became necessary to drop him for reasons of a diplomatic nature.

She watched him grow slowly larger, and suddenly stop. Leaning on a stile, which led to a foot-path from the road up the hill on which she stood, and back again behind her, he seemed to be watching something intently. Mrs. Blundell saw nothing to look at—no animal, no person. Surely he couldn't be looking at the sunset, a man who had seen nothing but sunsets since he was born! What a strange effect the country seemed to

have upon people! Bother sunsets! Why didn't he come? The dew would fall presently, she supposed, and her muslin would be ruined.

Why on earth was he taking off his cap? Was there some woman in the field whom she couldn't see? Apparently not. He still had his chin tilted upward. Sentimental, forsooth, for all his inches! Artistic, too, she supposed. So much the better. He would appreciate the dip of her hat, the exquisite outline of her face, the great soul-depth of her deep-blue eyes. She gathered that he had never seen any other women than women with aprons round their arms, with rolling r's.

How should she break her presence to him? What method would be most effective? Everything depended, she argued, as to which way he came up the hill—whether by the road or the foot-path. She hoped the walk had not disorganized the tiny curls upon her forehead. With a wet finger she smoothed her eyebrows, lightly and expertly sent home the hairpins which had worked out of their places, and, bending down, shook the dust from the edge of her frock.

When she looked down the hill again, Ashley had moved. He was on the foot-path between the waving grasses. His hands were behind his back, and his lips were moving. Very likely, Mrs. Blundell supposed, with a smile, he was repeating something out of those wretched books upon which he wasted so much money.

The problem was how to be most effective. Should she sit down and wait till he appeared on the side of the hill, and then ask him the way to the post-office, or should she stand on the tip-top of the hill, blocking the path he was following, outlined against the sky, flecked with the now paling red?

On came the man of nature with the indefinable longings, head down, arms behind, with a long, slow, swinging stride.

Against the sky, directly in his way, with wide-open, simple eyes, waited the little woman of the world, like a white, new-risen moon.

VII

" . . . No words of mine, my dear Milly, can convey the very least idea of the intense enjoyment that moment gave me. Even now—I have been back three hours—I can feel in my back that pleasant thrill which an exquisite bar of music, or a big moment in a well-written play always causes. Do you know? A sort of tingling, a fillip to that part of one which is supremely emotional.

"I didn't look at him for some minutes—seconds, I suppose, in cold, accurate English. Apparently, my eyes were fixed on the sky with that hungry, dreamy, girlish look which it took me so long to acquire, and which has come in most usefully on many former occasions. Nevertheless, I saw him stop with a great gasp, and stand with his huge arms hanging loosely at his sides, looking at me as though I were a will-o'-the-wisp, a vapor, a live poem. I wore that muslin I got for the Ashbeys' garden-party, transparent at the neck and arms, and the poppy hat everybody raved about so, and copied—the beasts! All nature seemed to be helping me, too—the faint, red glow, the green at my feet, the clear gold behind me. But I wanted the extra satisfaction of seeing what he would do when I looked into his eyes. So—oh, my dear, how thankful I am that Providence decided I should be a girl!—I gave myself a little shake, as though I had suddenly fallen to earth, and, with one of my best wide-eyed looks of intense, fearless innocence, suddenly met his gaze."

Little Mrs. Blundell put down her pen, knocked the ash off her cigarette, drew the soft folds of her night-dress more closely around her, and threw back her head with a quiet, silvery peal of laughter.

"I really thought he would have fallen down," she wrote, after a moment, bending her dimpling face over the table again. "In all my life, in the whole course of my experience, I never felt so thoroughly contented

with myself. It was like, I take it, a sudden, prolonged burst of applause from a packed theatre, or a eulogistic criticism in the pages of some really important paper. I wish you could have seen my wild man of the woods. His mouth fell open, his eyes seemed to start out of his head, and his heart jumped and beat and panted—I could see it in his neck.

"For just a second, I confess I was frightened. He is so big, so strong, so—so untutored, so much a child of nature, that, for a moment, I thought he might catch hold of me and—well, I took my eyes away, and went quickly past him down the hill.

"I was afraid to turn at first to see what he was doing, because, of course, I thought he would be looking after me. They usually do, you know. But, finally, as I didn't wish to lose any of the enjoyment of the thing, I stooped down, pretending to pick some grass, and looked back under my arm. My dear, he hadn't moved! There he was, just as I had left him, with his back to me, his arms still hanging at his sides, his shoulders heaving.

"If any one had given me a rope of pearls, I don't believe I could have been more pleased. You know, after one has been at it for three whole well-filled years, and begun to think that perhaps some of one's power has gone, it really is delightful to find, so convincingly, that the power is there in all its abundance. Don't you think so?

"As I looked, he moved, pulled himself together, and, staggering like a man who wakes from a sleeping draught, went away—never once looking back. I wonder if he still thinks I came from the sky? I say sky, because it sounds better than the other word I was thinking of. I remember being awfully pleased once because Reggie Rawnsley—dear old Reggie!—suddenly shook me quite violently, and told me I was an imp. Funny thing to be pleased about, wasn't it?"

VIII

PUTTING the letter into its envelope, little Mrs. Blundell took up a hand-glass, and, holding it in both her hands, with her elbows resting on the table, looked into it earnestly. There were four candles behind it, and, although the window was wide open, their wicks burned straight and unwaveringly.

The night was hot and breathless. No sound broke its deep stillness. The moon, in its first quarter, hung sharp against a sky clotted with stars. Beyond the narrow white road, and the wide stretch of sleeping corn, a line of poplars stood, with every branch cut clear against the pale blue. The scent of honeysuckle and syringa crept into the room.

She broke into a sudden laugh, and commenced, with the air of one who conscientiously goes through a form of daily exercise, to practise a series of facial expressions. She pursed up her mouth, opened her eyes wide, and raised her eyebrows.

"How *can* you?" she said, aloud.

Then she let her mouth become tremulous and her eyes tender.

"Must you *really* go?" she said.

And then, with the quickness of lightning, she closed her lips into a short, straight line, let her eyebrows meet in the middle, and half-closed her eyes.

"Pray, don't run away with the notion that I *want* you to stay," she said, coldly.

She tried this expression several times, with slight alterations, additions and emendations, and then changed it to one of intense sympathy and interest and rapt attention.

"Tell me about yourself," she said.

Apparently satisfied with that, she threw a gleam of challenge into her eyes, held back her head, with her lips slightly apart, and said, "No, I never allow any man to kiss me—except my husband."

Slow, heavy steps passed along the hard road. With the quickness of a minnow, and with all its elastic grace,

she darted to the window and leaned out.

It was Ashley, passing along, with his arms behind him, eyes to the ground.

Betty watched him until he became merged into the shadows, and the echo of his steps had died away.

Then she drew in her head, with laughing, eager eyes, gathered up her writing-case, and crossed to her bedroom. On the way, she stopped involuntarily before a calendar.

"Only ten days," she said, "only ten days, and he is so—so unexplored. But he no longer looks at the sky, I notice."

IX

It was the following evening upon which Betty wrote again:

"I slept badly. I don't think I ever remember to have slept badly before. It was a new experience, and so, I suppose, I ought not to grumble. On the contrary, as my whole life is devoted to the search of new experiences, I suppose I ought to be glad. As a matter of fact, I grumbled horribly until I got out of bed, and looked at myself in the glass.

"I dreamed the most uncomfortable thing. I dreamed that this person, this farmer, had choked me, and that he laid me down upon the crest of the hill—our hill—and covered me up with withered leaves. My husband ran up the hill, and stood looking at him, with the most peculiar expression in his eyes. Although I was dead, I saw and heard everything. From what I remember now—a good deal has happened since this morning—I think John Ashley was out of his mind. He sat by me, smiling foolishly. All the strong lines around his mouth seemed to have been loosened. He looked like some bronze statue, over which some one had put a thin layer of putty as a practical joke. I remember being a little shocked at his sudden alteration. But I could have laughed at the careful way in which he put the leaves all over me. He didn't

shovel them over me; he placed them gently, one by one, as though he were dressing a dinner-table. They really looked rather becoming on my white dress. If Evelyn is in funds when he comes back—only nine days now!—I shall get Friola to build me a white evening frock, covered with copper-colored leaves. I am sure it would be rather effective, with bronze shoes and a wreath of the same leaves in my hair.

"But let me tell you how it seemed to me that Evelyn looked, before I forget. He looked like a man in blind-man's buff when the handkerchief is taken off his eyes, and he finds himself facing people he thought were all behind him.

"So I've discovered you!" I heard him say to me. "And he's choked you, has he? Well, it saves me the trouble, and serves you right."

"I think I was more surprised than hurt. But as Evelyn turned away to go down the hill, lurching like a drunken man, I did all I could to cry out to him to come back, and kill Ashley horribly, and I couldn't. My tongue felt like a huge garden-roller. I strained, and tugged, and pushed, and couldn't move it. I suppose the effort woke me.

"I knew the whole thing was a dream, of course, but it seemed so real, so actual, that, for a moment or two, I was afraid to open my eyes, fearing I should see Ashley's inane face, and hear Evelyn—dear, fond, old bull-necked Evelyn—thudding down the hill.

"I ate three new-laid eggs this morning! They were like cream. I believe they were born on purpose for me. I must say, the whole place is most kind and obliging. It was very nice and fresh in the little sitting-room.

"I wished all the time that John Ashley could come in and see me. I must have looked so simple and harmless and wide-eyed. I wore that perfectly heavenly breakfast gown that I took from Edith Dinting to settle her bridge debts to me. Do you remember it?—hand-painted chiffon, and miles of lace—real lace—cut low at the

neck, and falling away at the elbows—and, as you know, my arms are very beautiful.

"I couldn't help thinking, as I put on my morning frock, what small things are capable of changing one's entire mental attitude. Yesterday afternoon I loathed this place, with its quiet, its scents, its rural noises. I hated to feel off the map, and looked forward to the ten days here with that dread which, I imagine, a criminal experiences at the beginning of a term of ten years.

"Think of me this morning, then think of me last night. Already I eye the calendar suspiciously, to see that it doesn't cheat me out of a day. Oh, Milly, you don't know what it is to me deliberately to lay my little plans to fascinate a man—such a man!—or what exquisite pleasure it gives me to note the gradual effect they have upon him! I suppose a spider is the only animal which gets the same kind of satisfaction. Not that I wish to compare myself to an animal, although, my dear, I am not very different from most beautiful women, and it is a futile argument to say that this kind of game—it is a kind of game—isn't animal-like. Why, Eve did it!

"I must know men pretty well, I think. I walked straight to the top of the hill where I met John Ashley last evening. I knew that either he would be already there, or he would be there shortly.

"I found him already there! He was lying on his back, with his head on his hands, asleep. He looked like Gulliver, at full length. I never saw such a really superb person. I wondered, impishly, what he would say if I started running over him like a Lilliputian, and I longed to tack him down to the earth so that he couldn't move, and then tickle him with a blade of grass.

"He's wonderfully good-looking. His eyebrows are red, and his mustache is almost flaxen. It looks lighter than it really is because his skin is deeply tanned with the sun. His nose is too large, perhaps, but it is a good one, and shows breeding by its bridge.

And I don't think I ever saw such a square, determined jaw. He was breathing as men breathe when they are in their second sleep—soundlessly. Indeed, I had to bend over him and listen, and look closely at his chest to make sure that he was only sleeping.

"I watched him for a long time, wondering what effect I should have upon him. He is such virgin soil. I have never met his kind before. Evelyn, poor, dear old Evelyn, was so easy to manage. One's few quite elementary tricks were sufficient. When I made up my mind that I couldn't stand home—its dull routine, constant economy, everlasting living with the gas turned down—and that I would become Mrs. Blundell as a stepping-stone to London, I just let my hand rest upon his knee as we drove to a dance in his uncle's hideously old-fashioned carriage. And afterward, when we were sitting out in the Summer-house, an imaginary spider had to be shaken out of my skirt, and I managed, before I sat down, to undo the button of my shoe. When he rose from fastening it, there was a glitter in his blue eyes, and his hands trembled. I took care, also, that three other people should get into the old carriage with us going home, so that it became necessary for us to be very close together for some time; and, whenever we passed over a more than usually rutty part of the road, I held his hand very tightly, without my glove, in a nervous, helpless way. He proposed to me while we waited on the steps for old Jane to open the door. His first kiss told me how effective these merely preliminary tricks had been. You must remember that Evelyn is one of those men—they form the vast majority—who are very easily moved. For instance, a very few glasses of wine go to his head. He quite bellows at all the obviously bellowy parts of a play. You see, he is inclined to be stout.

"With Reggie, it was quite different. He is slight and tall and dark, and such things would only have tended to disgust. With him, it was dangerous to

take the initiative. He liked the will-o'-the-wisp method—the elusive, the invitation in the eye, the quickly erected fence. With him, the impossible was the only thing to be desired. One had to play one's subtle tricks in his case, one's second-grade tricks. And with Valentine Worthing, who is the third type of man—there are but three—who is an artist at one moment, a Goth at the next, a mixture of the most refined and the coarsest sensualism, epicure and animal, one had to combine tricks belonging to the first and the second grades, according to his mood. But one had to exaggerate both. It was a good deal more trouble, and I can't tell you how much more dangerous to one's self, and, consequently, how infinitely more enjoyable and worth one's while. Danger is the very backbone of the game—a game which is, of course, utterly spoiled when a goal is scored.

"But what am I to do with this huge, untutored instrument? What chords, what runs, what discords am I to strike on his untouched keys? He is sensual, but he must have caught something of the sensualism of Nature, who is the lightest female of us all. Any man can be celibate who has never had the opportunity of being anything else. Opportunity proves the mettle. I firmly believe that there would eventually be no such thing as animalism in men and women if we were taught to concentrate our whole power of creation upon things we had a taste for. The whole thing is merely an innate desire to create, and, if we all did things—wrote, painted, carved wood, bound books, made clothes—it doesn't matter what—our animalism would be put into the work we performed, and we should all become celibate. Nature knows that well enough, though, and she has no desire to be left alone in the world, as she found herself in the days before Adam and Eve trod upon her bosom. That is why, I suppose, animalism is called nature by people who dislike to be called or to think themselves animals.

"I think I must have stood by my

boredom-dispeller for half an hour before I made up my mind that I should have to treat him as I treated Valentine Worthing. I came to the conclusion that there would be very little difference between these two men. They are both artists, both Goths, both epicures, both animals. It only happens that one has grown almost tired of creating, and the other hasn't yet begun to create at all. Therefore it means that I must combine the tricks of the first and second grades, just as lightly with Ashley as I exaggerated them with Worthing. And even, practised lightly, I shall, thank goodness, be playing with fire. But I don't intend to get burnt! A burnt child dreads the fire. I am Evelyn Blundell's wife!

"Finally, my young god began to show signs of waking—I think he must have been sitting where he saw me all night—and I walked away, keeping my back turned to him. I would have wagered any amount of money that he would speak to me, and I should have lost. When I looked around, he had gone. I could see him going rapidly down the hill to his farm. He was not running away from me, though; he was running away from himself."

X

BETTY, with a smile in which there was intense pleasure coupled with intense annoyance, watched the farmer until he was out of sight. She had meant to speak to him that morning, or arrange that he speak to her.

She remembered that letters arrived in the village at midday, and so she slowly retraced her steps. She made up her mind that she would sleep the afternoon away, and return to her spot in the evening. She was one of those women who always sleep in the afternoon, however busy they may be. She considered that it prevented wrinkles, and with her, as with most women, wrinkles were terrible things. She had a great dread of growing old, and she would do without new

gowns, even, in order to have face-massage.

She found on the table of her little sitting-room a large packet from her friend, in which were enclosed all the letters which had been delivered at her flat since her absence. She noticed, with a smile, that the packet was addressed to "Miss" Blundell, and she thanked heaven that Milly was a woman of imagination. She herself had meant to tell her landlady that she was unmarried. She knew intuitively that Ashley was one of those queer, old-fashioned persons who wouldn't allow himself, from a sense of mistaken honor, to flirt with another man's wife, and this substitution on the part of Milly would save her the trouble of telling a lie.

Betty pushed aside all the letters which were in sufficiently good hand-writings to proclaim themselves bills, and pounced upon one written in the microscopic style of men who wish to be thought brainy. It was from Valentine Worthing, and bore the Regent-street postmark.

The sight of it sent a rush of blood to her cheeks. "Regent street!" she cried aloud, and kissed the postmark, ecstatically.

It contained only a few lines, with a ragged margin. Betty had expected to find many pages of the poetical, many pages full of baffled desire, be-seechings and anger.

She read:

"You dear thing! How hopelessly you misread me. But I know you for what you are. Don't I know myself? Aren't we precisely alike? We were playing exactly the same game. I only wished to work you up to a pitch of emotion when you could refuse me nothing, and then say to you, 'No, thanks!' And all you wanted was to do the same to me, and refuse in the same way. There is a most euphonious name for us which is not included in the dictionary. Perhaps you know it?"

"Tibi,
"VALENTINE."

Betty Blundell's mouth took a hard, angry line, and she crushed the letter in her hand. Then her vanity pushed through her momentary humiliation,

and she smoothed out the paper, and read it through again.

"How clever of him," she said, "to try to turn the tables like that! Any idiot could see plainly enough how successful I must have been."

And in this way, also, Betty proved herself no different from any other woman.

XI

CAME old Jesse Sloke into Ashley's sitting-room once more. His crinkled face, like nothing so much as a dried pippin, was pursed up with amazement. His master's breakfast had been placed, as it had been placed every morning for fifteen years, upon the table. And it was untouched. Old Jesse had tottered up to Ashley's room at a quarter to seven, thinking, perhaps, that his master had not heard the call. He found the bed had not been slept in.

He looked at the clock for the twentieth time. It was some minutes after twelve. Such irregularity in the routine of the farm had never happened before. He had called his master at four-thirty in the Summer, and at six-thirty in the Winter, every morning for fifteen years, every morning since the old master had been put under the Scotch fir in the little churchyard. Every morning, for fifteen years, the breakfast had been put upon the table at half-past seven in the Summer and half-past eight in the Winter. Every morning, for fifteen years, luncheon had been ready at one, tea at five, and dinner at eight o'clock; and every evening, for fifteen years, the house had been locked up and every light out by nine-thirty.

What was the meaning of this? His annoyance gave way to anger. What right had the master to upset everything in this way? People got used to things. People—especially when they had crossed the meridian of their lives with one set of habits—couldn't tolerate sudden changes. The old man walked from the sitting-room into the hall, and back again, a hundred times, arguing in this way to himself. Each

time he reëntered the room, his anger rose. It was too bad, he said to himself. *He* was up in time to call the master, why wasn't the master ready to be called? The breakfast had been got ready by his wife to the minute! Why wasn't the master ready for his breakfast? It was not fair! It was not just! If the master wished to begin being irregular, he should have been irregular years before. It wasn't giving him a chance. It would take him some time to shake himself out of his habits of regularity.

The sitting-room clock's thin voice struck one. The deeper, commoner, rougher voice of the kitchen clock hurried to announce the same hour.

Fright drove the old man's anger away. Something had happened to the master—the master he had loved and served, but never understood. He couldn't have been struck by lightning, for there had been no storm. He couldn't have been attacked by gipsies. He barely remembered to have seen gipsies in the neighborhood.

Whistling, with a brave attempt at gaiety and unconcern, in order that his fright might not spread itself to his wife, the old man passed through the open front door of the farm-house, and went along the path to the white gate.

There, with eyes sharpened with fear, he gazed up and down the road. The dust lay thick and white. In the air, myriads of golden specks danced lazily. Not a fleck of cloud broke the faint, endless blue of the sky. The birds were silent. Only the insects, drawn out of their lairs by the warmth, chattered and buzzed.

But nothing disturbed the great, soft anthem of the day. Nothing moved on the road.

The old man shuddered. Something had happened to the master. Involuntarily, he raised his twisted fingers, and clasped them together in front of his eyes, and called out, "Master, master!"

A distant sound of heavy steps was heard, and, with a cry of joy and relief, old Sloke saw the master coming toward the farm at full speed, running

as a man runs who is pursued—as a man runs who is afraid.

He came nearer and nearer, at the end of his second breath, and at last swung through the gate, tore up the path and through the door, and flung himself, panting and dust-covered, into a chair.

The old man followed quickly. Putting his head into the sitting-room after a decent interval, he found his master panting still, with his head between his hands. Ashley had run rapidly, with all his strength, but he had not been able to out-distance himself.

And again the old man was right. Something had happened to the master. A woman was in his blood for the first time in his life.

XII

JOHN ASHLEY felt the old man's sympathetic, uneasy eyes upon him, and, with an exclamation of rage Jesse Sloke had never heard the master use before, he rose, waved him away, shut the door with violence, and locked it.

With a feeling of shame, Ashley clutched himself by the throat, and tried to shake out of his eyes the face of the woman. He cursed himself for a fool, and repeated over and over again the words of his father's letter.

He leaned on the mantel, and looked at the photograph of his father, mutely, in an agony of self-reproach. He gazed, with the deepest sympathy and love, into the stern eyes, the lined face, the sunken cheeks. He recalled all the tenderness, all the care, all the solicitude, his father had daily shown him. The very tones of his voice rang in his ears. What a wretched son he would be to break a promise to such a man!

As he lifted the photograph to his lips, with a renewed feeling of strength, the face of the woman, the delicately cut, sweet face, with its large blue eyes and exquisite coloring, came between.

For several hours, with feverish eagerness, Ashley did everything he could think of to regain mastery over him-

self. He took down his favorite books one after another, and read with a concentration that was almost painful. All went well for a few minutes. She had gone, he said to himself. And, at that instant, the face looked out at him from the pages. He put the books back into their places, and endeavored to distract his attention by making a tour of the long, beamed, low-ceilinged room, looking at each familiar engraving and print as though he had never seen it before. There was not one in the room, big or little, out of which the face did not grow.

It was everywhere, no matter where he looked. It gazed down upon him from the beams, it gazed up at him from the worn carpet. He turned to the window, and looked out at the trim lawn, the beds of flaming colors, the quaintly cut hedges. Every diamond pane contained the face.

At last, worn out, he flung himself, face downward, upon the sofa, buried his eyes in the cushions, and broke into the wild sobbings of a boy.

He had realized that he would be obliged to break his promise. He had realized that it was too difficult, too impossible to keep. He had been living in a fool's paradise. Sooner or later, it was bound to come—this debacle, this great toppling over his head of the edifice he had built so carefully round himself. His father had imposed too great a sacrifice upon him. He was a man like other men. He had read of love, of lust, impatiently. But love sent the blood spinning through his veins, and beat like a sledge-hammer at his temples.

Presently he rose. His face was wet with his tears—the first tears he had shed since the death of his father.

A feeling of enormous relief passed over him. The struggle was over. He was in love. He gloried in it. It was delicious. His father must have made a hideous mistake. *This* woman was not one of those who betrayed. She had the face of an angel. He would meet her again, and speak to her. Some day, he might

persuade her to marry him, and come to the farm. God! what a day! Books were all very well; pictures were all very well; nature, whose every mood he understood, was all very well. But what were they as compared with flesh and blood, the beauty, the grace, the mystery of a woman?

"Dead things!" he cried, flinging up his arms, "dead things! Give me life!"

But before he left the room, he crossed hurriedly to the mantel, and turned to the wall the picture of his father's face.

XIII

"I WENT out to my hill again this afternoon," wrote little Mrs. Blundell, "but my man wasn't there. The grass was still flat and sorry for itself where his great body had been; and, having nothing better to do, I sat there to wait for him.

"I had plenty to think about. I had that morning received, among the batch you sent me from the flat, a most insolent, and yet a most ingenious, letter from Valentine Worthing. I wonder why men who wish people to think they are clever, always cultivate the same tiny writing, and sign their names so that they cannot possibly be made out? Valentine Worthing's handwriting is smaller and more slovenly than most. He said, in effect, that he had all along perfectly understood the game I had been playing with him, and that he had been playing precisely the same game with me. Of course, I don't believe this. It is so easy to guess the solution of a riddle after one has been told. My suddenly going away gave him the cue to my pastime. But I couldn't feel any annoyance with him. All I felt was that, after all, he was merely an ordinary, commonplace person, with the addition of a hideous deformity.

"What did anger me, I confess, were the letters from my tradespeople, asking me for immediate settlement.

What a peculiar race tradespeople are! 'Immediate settlement' is the most ridiculous expression. Of course, naturally, like any one else who is expected to do with the pittance of a naval officer's wife, I am hideously in debt. My dressmaker's bill makes my blood run cold. What Evelyn will say I can conceive only too well. That account of Friola's alone would, if settled as it stands, swamp two years' pay! And I have repeatedly assured him that I have done extremely well on the allowance he made me. But I shall have to devote all my time and all my best smiles to get him to write to his uncle for the money. He'll complain, anyhow. He calls it eating the pie of humiliation to borrow money.

"It was really a perfect afternoon. A faint breeze had come up, and the air was cooler. It was so clear that, sitting on my hill, I could see for miles. I think I am getting almost to like this placid place. The feeling was an extraordinary one. I was so awfully alone. It was like waking to find one's self thrust back three or four hundred years, with nothing left of the life one knew but a memory. It seemed inconceivable, sitting there surrounded by trees and fields, fields and trees, and sky—sky—sky, that such things as streets and cabs and buildings and people existed anywhere. I sat for a half-hour, perfectly happy. Can you believe it, knowing me?

"It's odd, but do you know, Milly, except for this peculiar, ever-present desire to pose, and to tease people of the opposite sex, I believe I should be quite a dear—an artist or a painter or a poet. Sometimes—not often—I am sorry that I am not, and I am almost inclined to think of my father and mother with dislike for having grafted in me this thing Valentine said he understood. I suppose it is rather beastly. I am certain it will land me in hot water, sooner or later. I'll give it up, some day, perhaps, and develop some other kind of taste, and go in for being normal and healthy. But not yet—not while my man of the

woods remains untamed. Unconsciously, he has flattered my vanity to such an extent that I am bound to go on. I am bound to try effects with this quaint, primeval giant. Fancy his running away like that!

"I shall never forget the look he gave me. It acted on my vanity like oil. I don't quite know how to describe it to you. I am sure there was fear in his eyes. And, of course, there was the wildest admiration. I am not sure there wasn't just a touch of reverence. Most beautiful women have tasted the delight of fascinating men at one time or another, even if they do not use their power often. It is a power. No king, no prime minister, no general, no despot, no slave-owner, can ever feel so utterly all-powerful as a beautiful woman who has a man cringing at her feet.

"I suppose I'm an awful fool to give myself away in black and white in this way, even to such a dear old oyster as you are. If ever you were to quarrel with me, goodness, wouldn't you have the whip in your hand! But you won't. I know that. I have to share my triumphs with some one. And writing letters to you is a far more satisfactory way of feeding my vanity than putting it down in a diary. I have the greatest contempt for women who keep diaries. They are such liars!

"Well, I waited for two hours on my hill in this ecstatic mood, and I believe I should have been there two hours longer but for a sudden clap of thunder, following a vivid flash of lightning. Without my noticing them, a great bank of clouds had been gathering behind me. I jumped up as the first drop of rain fell on my cheek. With it—what an odd thing the brain is!—came a sudden inspiration. Time was short, and, as Mahomet wouldn't come to the mountain, the mountain would have to go to Mahomet. Do you see? I made up my mind to take advantage of the storm, make my way quickly to his farm-house, run to the door with my best expression of timid fright, and beg for shelter.

"This I did, half regretting it when I found that I was bound to cover at least a mile and a half. My dear, the rain came down, literally, in buckets. Luckily I had on one of my oldest frocks, for it was wringing wet in no time. Every time a flash of lightning came, and the flame darted about among the trees, I wished I hadn't come.

"I was exhausted when, at last, I reached the farm. I wasn't sure it was *his* farm, but it was the only one about, so I ran up to the door, and rang the bell. It was opened by an old man, with a prim, crinkled face, who looked as though he saw a ghost. I begged him to let me sit somewhere out of the storm, giving him a faint, sweet smile. Gasping with surprise, and with a wistful attempt to be polite, he asked me to enter the master's room.

"My heart leaped within my breast. The blinds were down, the fire-irons and the mirror were covered up with a cloth. I stood for a moment, looking about me—such a lovely old room, beautifully furnished—and the old person murmured something about fetching his wife, and ran off.

"The old woman came almost at once, quite flustered with excitement.

"'Oh, poor lady!' she cried; 'and such a beautiful dress, too!' And then, talking all the time, she ran upstairs, and presently came down with a towel and a man's dressing-gown and slippers. Shutting the door, she undid my frock, rubbed my hands and face, took off my hat, shoes and stockings, put on the dressing-gown—'the master's,' she said—*his*, Milly dear!—and then ran to the kitchen with my frock and shoes and stockings.

"Isn't my luck astounding? Here I was, not only in his own room, but in his own room in such a helpful costume! Think of it from the purely artistic point of view! The dressing-gown—evidently one John Ashley wore in his early youth—showed my neck, and my ankles and feet—my feet thrust into a pair of red slippers of the most elephantine description.

The rain had made my always curly hair all the more curly. I felt like Trilby in the studio, and I'm sure I looked infinitely sweeter than she.

"Suddenly, I heard a deep voice, then two others excitedly joining in. The door opened, and the old woman came in, followed by—oh, what fortune is mine!—my untamed man of the woods, my primeval giant."

XIV

MRS. BLUNDELL put her pen down, threw back her head, and burst into a peal of laughter. The silver notes of it danced about the little room long after she started writing again.

"For some time he stood in the doorway, his handsome, unusual head almost touching the frame-work, blushing like a schoolboy. I stood up, timid, shy, constrained, clutching the dressing-gown nervously about me, wordless, like an ingénue in a play. The old woman, with all the latent romance in her nature stirred, babbled the story of my arrival, while the old man got a word in here and there, whenever she was positively obliged to stop for breath. The situation was immensely amusing. What more picturesque introduction to him could I possibly have desired?"

"'I will go and make some tea for the young lady, sir,' said the old woman, at last. 'Come, Jesse, quick!' The door closed upon them, and we were alone.

"Have you ever experienced that horrible desire to laugh in church, or at a funeral, or in the midst of some quite serious scene at the theatre? The feeling to laugh inordinately seized me then. Luckily, a sneeze came, and gave me relief, or I feel certain I should have fallen into the nearest chair and screamed.

"My dear Milly, his face was a picture. It was positively alight! His eyes danced and gleamed with pleasure and excitement. But he made no attempt to speak. He simply stood behind a tall-backed chair—quite a

good chair, excellently carved, and so old!—leaning on the back of it, gazing at me.

"'I—I am so very sorry to put everybody to so much trouble,' I said, in that high-pitched, girlish voice which has always been one of my most valuable stocks-in-trade; 'I don't think I ever remember such a violent storm. I am dreadfully nervous when it lightens.'

"I paused, and glanced up at him. A smile passed over his face. It had the most extraordinary effect upon it. It looked as a field looks when a sudden shaft of sun sweeps across it. But he said nothing. I don't think he was nervous or shy, as we use those words ordinarily. He merely seemed infinitely delighted in a boyish kind of way.

"He made me feel as if I were a new horse, or the latest gun presented to him on his birthday.

"At first, his continuous, wide-eyed stare made me quite uncomfortable, and I don't think he listened to a single word of my small-talk. He simply stood there, in an easy, unself-conscious attitude, his deeply-tanned hands clasped round the back of the chair, devouring me.

"I babbled on. I said how very kind he was to take me in, how very sorry I was to put his servants to any inconvenience, and what a lovely old house it seemed to be. Quite twenty minutes of this one-sided conversation went on, and I confess I was a little relieved when the old couple brought in a tea-tray. I had begun to feel that I had exhausted every subject of a commonplace nature I ever thought about.

"'Shall I pour out the tea?' I asked, with a tiny, timid smile, when we were alone again.

"'Thank you,' he said.

"And, all the time, he stood in front of me, watching me intently, with an interest almost whimsical. It made the old occupation almost a new one; then I suddenly remembered that I was the first woman—gentlewoman—he had ever met.

"He bowed as he took his cup, and,

instantly forgetting he had got it in his hand, watched me as I stirred my tea, and sipped it.

"Having nothing more to say, and not feeling the need of making conversation, I contented myself with returning his smile, when I caught his rapt eyes, and eating. My flight through the rain and the cooler air had made me ravenous, and the home-made cakes were perfectly delicious.

"While I ate and drank, I looked about me. Such a dear old room, Milly—just the sort of room one reads about in books and so rarely comes across. It was long and narrow—at least, its length gave it the appearance of narrowness, and was lined, five feet from the old oak floor, with bulging book-shelves, except where the great Dutch fireplace stood. And above the books, right up to the ceiling, hung pictures—pictures of all kinds and sizes—paintings, etchings, prints, engravings, all good and old, and in the best taste. I could see Carlyle in the shelves, and Shakespeare, Dickens, George Eliot, Thackeray, Swift, Addison, Gibbon, Milton, Byron, Keats, Goldsmith, and heaven knows who besides; at any rate, all the people one calls dry! There were, so far as I could see, no modern novels. And they all looked in that warm condition, that comfortable, bulgy state books get into that are frequently in hand. They didn't stare out at one in a stiff, proud, pained way, as they do from the shelves of those people who put them there, morocco-bound, for show. They beamed at me in a jovial, friendly way, like so many elderly uncles with rosy cheeks and white hair and portly stomachs. Dear old things, I loved them! And as to the pictures, they clung to the walls as though they had grown upon them, and never wished to leave them. Here a big one, there a little one—anyhow, all higgledy-piggledy, and yet exactly as they ought to be.

"At the far end of the room, a long, low window, diamond-paned, with shutters of black oak, threw the light over a deep window-seat, covered with

a rose-bud chintz, very worn and dimmed, upon the polished oak floor. And through this, I could catch a glimpse of antediluvian Scotch firs standing in their peculiar, silent, dignified manner here and there upon a lawn. Behind them, and in front of a stained, but steady, red wall, were beds choking with masses of cloves and pinks and sweet-williams and London pride, and all those country-cousin flowers that have become the fashion again with us. And over the wall, the tops of many dusky red barns and out-houses peeped, in quite a curious way.

"The whole place fitted my giant like a glove. It was all, like him, so good to look at, so simple, so upright, so clean, picturesque and unconscious. It all, like him, seemed to be utterly behind the times, utterly unknowing, utterly unspoiled. And, as he stood there, tanned a brick-dust color, with his eyes clear and steady and child-like, his eyebrows and hair burnt copper, his back broad and straight, his long, well-set legs firm and strong, upon my honor, he seemed to be related to the Scotch firs, to the old, wonderful books, and the dark, beautiful prints.

"It wouldn't have surprised me in the least if, at night, when he sat at the little flap table at his dinner, shining with health and fresh air, with the light of the cranky lamp throwing his strong features upon the wall, these old books had popped out of the shelves and stood around him, with their glasses on their noses, and talked, while he said, 'Yes, sir,' and 'No, sir,' and 'Indeed, sir?' in his deep, vibrating voice.

"When I looked at him, after all these things had flashed through my mind, there he was, still standing in front of me, his untasted tea in his hand. Any other man would have been boorish, impossible. But, oddly enough, I looked for nothing else in my giant.

"Nothing that he could have said, of course, would have fed my vanity half so satisfactorily as this long,

silent, meaning stare. Every second, the expression in his eyes changed. Wonder came, love came—that new-born, wonderful love, the first love.

"Oh, Milly, what a power it is—this gift to fascinate men! I know nothing in this world that gives me so keen, so delirious a pleasure as the exercise of it. I feel almost like a magician. It gives me the faculty of turning a man into a hungry animal—even such a man as this one, who is ashamed and fearful, and who, for choice, would forget everything except just that I am beautiful and dainty and ethereal.

"But the spell was at last broken. He put down his cup, and awoke. His smile became self-conscious and nervous. He fidgeted shyly, began sentences and left them unfinished. Luckily, the old woman came in and said my gown was dry, and the storm had passed. And so, with a smile as nervous as his own, and every bit as shy, I hurried after the old woman, out of the room and up-stairs to hers.

"It cost me half a sovereign. I would gladly have paid fifty times that amount for the afternoon.

"I dressed quietly, listening to the garrulous chatter of the well-meaning dame—my frock was utterly ruined—and then followed her down to the hall.

"'Good-bye, Mr. Ashley,' I said, giving him my hand, timidly; 'thank you so much!'

XV

"He took my hand for an instant, and then, letting it go, said, stammering:

"May I—may I——?"

"Oh, that's very kind of you! Indeed, I should be delighted. I think the storm has made me nervous."

"On the face of the old woman, as she watched us go out together, there was a peculiar smile in which I could read a reawakened romance, an almost pathetic hope. But the old man scowled at me. I was a new invention, and therefore a danger. I had the satisfaction of knowing that I was the first 'unvillagery' woman—I hate the

word lady; it reeks of tram-cars and clearance sales and suburban tea-fights—who had ever been seen with 'the master.'

"The white dust of the morning had become mud. Pools had formed along the edge of the road. A kind of steam rose from the earth, and the heads of the corn, which before had been straining to catch whatever moisture the air contained, were bending down, looking gratefully at the soft earth at their feet. It was a couple of hours before sunset, and the sun, even then quite warm, fell softly upon everything. The delicious air was alive. Thousands, tens of thousands of gnats moved in thick battalions above our heads, and, to the right and left, the air was filled with the cheerful, lively voices of birds.

"The freshness of everything was contagious. We both walked on springs... For no reason at all we both laughed. A bird, which, after struggling wildly and tugging with all its might at a worm in a corn-field, let go and darted annoyed away at our approach, brought the laugh to our lips. Our own shadows, his so long, mine so short, cast on the road in front of us, sent us into peals of mirth. We were like two school-children let loose after school. I believe if I had started running helter-skelter along the road, he would have chased me.

"All his shyness faded. With the pride of the proprietor, he pointed out to me the excellence of the crops, laughingly explaining the difference between corn and barley, barley and oats. He never referred to his first meeting me on the hill, but he referred to the hill, and told me—no doubt thinking what a diplomatic touch it was—that he always spent a certain amount of time there every day in the Summer, reading.

"'To-morrow,' he added, 'I shall be there in the afternoon.'

"The sun had begun to set when I got back to the cottage. My dear, we had taken two hours to walk two miles! This time *he* had done all the talking, and if I needed any convincing on the

subject, he had convinced me as to his being the most interesting person I had ever met on whom to exercise my peculiar gifts. He had proved what a boy he was, and what a man he was, how immense was his knowledge of nature—and how infinitesimal of human nature; what an artist he was, and what a Goth.

"Oh, my dear, I feel I am going to have some of the most enjoyable days I shall ever have in my life!"

XVI

A SMILE was still playing around his mouth as Ashley swung into the road. He had removed his cap to Mrs. Blundell with the air of a Quixote. He had not forgotten to put it back. He kept his head bare to the soft breeze as a tribute to her, while he made his way unconsciously to the hill where he had seen her first.

He stood there, erect and firm, and watched the sun go down. A thousand voices sang to him. It was a new song, a song he had never heard before. It stirred, soothed and excited him. It made him smile and tremble. It filled him with fear and joy. Love had thrust her golden key into his long-closed heart, turned it in the rusty lock, and flung the door wide open.

He understood everything. He had not been living hitherto. He had thought that it was right that life should get everything out of him that was in him to devote to it. The whole aspect of things was suddenly changed. It was as though some one had suddenly planted him on his feet after he had been standing all his life on his head.

He was amazed to think that he could have spent all his years in such a position. Everything, for the first time, looked right. The sun became his servant instead of his master; the earth his very good friend, instead of a tyrant at whose every change of mood he shuddered. Everything that had seemed great, became tiny, minute, a

matter of slight consequence. What did it matter now if frost spoiled his early roots, rain his crops? Nothing. Nothing mattered. Nothing of importance existed in the world except love—not the kind of love he had given to his father, not the love he had since poured out upon his books, not the love he felt for nature. Those were mild, gentle kinds of love, more suited to women. He had suddenly become awake. The only love that mattered to him was the love that was alive! The only thing worth living for was just to hold *her*—the woman—close against his heart.

For hours, he stood there, looking out, but seeing nothing, a rush of new thoughts tumbling over one another in his brain.

The sun touched his face with rosy hand, and went down. The moon slipped into her place, and smiled faintly upon him. The stars, like children when the school doors swing back, rushed into the open, in great clusters. One by one, the lights went out in the village beneath. The occasional faint shout ceased. Only the clock in the tower of the church remained awake. With relentless punctuality, though always with a suggestion of self-excuse, its mellow voice sang the death and birth of the hours.

XVII

"ANOTHER day gone of the few that are left to me, Milly," little Mrs. Blundell wrote. "The rapidity with which they slip through my fingers is positively illegal. It's always the way when one is really having a good time.

"This afternoon, I went to the hill, feeling like a very girl. The sun was deliciously warm after the heavy storm, and all the leaves, grasses, trees and hedges smelled sweet. One felt that the wife of the clerk of the weather had made an inspection, found an accumulation of dust and cobwebs about, and had ordered her servants to turn the place inside out. The operation

was inconvenient; the result refreshing.

"I danced out of the cottage with the best feeling toward the world and myself. I had every reason to be glad that I was alive, for I found that a frock I had intended to throw away came out looking pretty nearly new!

"When I arrived at the hill, my young god was standing up with his hands in his pockets, smiling. For a moment, I hardly recognized him. He looked like the younger brother of the John Ashley I had met the day before. All the lines had gone out of his face—all the sternness, the aloofness, the underlying discontent. He was a great boy.

"So glad you've come," he said, turning to me, eagerly. "I began to think you had been carried into the air on the breeze, and borne away like a petal! Will you sit here, or here with your back to the tree? No, don't sit with your back to the tree; the moss will stain your dress."

"I sat down on the smooth, spongy turf, and gave one of my best girlish laughs.

"You can't have been waiting long," I said.

"Long?" he cried, flinging himself at my feet. "Don't you call a thousand million years long?"

"He laughed as he said it, but I thought that a thousand million years couldn't have worked a greater change in his face and his manner than twelve hours had done.

"With his elbows in the grass and his chin in the palms of his brown hands, he lay looking up at me with his eyes full of a dancing light. This afternoon, unlike yesterday afternoon, it was he who did all the talking. I hardly said a word for an hour.

"He babbled about every conceivable thing under heaven, except the things of the moment. It was all perfectly charming, sometimes humorous, sometimes fanciful, always whimsical, because so utterly, almost impossibly, unworldly. From the few questions I put to him, I could see that he was quite outside the movement of things.

He didn't even know whether the Liberals or the Tories were in power, and cared less. It was like the song of a thrush, whose little life had been spent within a whistle of its nest. And, all the time, his eyes were fixed on me with a look of such boyish adoration that instinctively, unconsciously, I slipped off my wedding-ring, and put it into my pocket.

"I could see that my methods with him would have to be most guarded and careful; that anything that wasn't extremely subtle and cunning would tend to jar upon him. Like all men who make the acquaintance of the little god late in life, he idealized. I wasn't a woman; I was an angel. I didn't stand on the rude earth by his side; I sat upon a cloud all carved and picked out with gems.

"It was all very new, very fascinating. I had had no experience quite like it. All the boys I had met in my earliest youth were boys who were cramming for the army. And you know the kind of boys they are—*éditions de luxe* of worldliness, first states of knowledge.

"For three wonderful hours, I was actually alone with this boy-monster, this baby-giant, behaving as any simple little girl would have done. For three hours, I was alone with an untried man, without experimenting upon him in the way that gives me such sheer delight. I made up my mind to try to be just a sweet, laughing, happy little maiden. I made up my mind to leave him with the remembrance of merely white love in his eyes, the delicious, wholesome love with which they were filled.

"But that imp beside me willed otherwise. Heavens! how deep-rooted one's habits become! I suddenly put my hand close against his. He babbled on, without noticing. I moved it slightly, and began talking lightly, airily, in his own manner. I saw him glance quickly at me. I saw a gleam come into his eyes.

"I gained my momentary triumph. But I was sorry immediately. In his case it seemed such a pity."

XVIII

EVELYN BLUNDELL was the kind of man men call "a good chap," and women "a dear," and justly so, as men go. He lied as often, but not more often, than any of us. He played an excellent game of bridge, and parted with money he couldn't afford to lose with invariable cheerfulness. He took chaff quite as well as he gave it, and grumbled continually at his profession. Like a healthy-minded Englishman, he roundly cursed whichever party was in government, and was willing, at any time, to teach any cabinet minister his job, whether it had to do with a subject of which he, Blundell, knew nothing or not. His temper was like a large check in fashionable tweed—violent, but quite ordinary when you get used to it. He had as infinite a capacity for martyrdom as most other men, and could draw generously upon a reserve fund of sentimentality at any moment. To look at, he was no different from ninety-nine men out of a hundred—men, I mean, of some breeding, decently educated. He had a fairly steady, fairly clean eye, plenty of hair of reddish tinge, crisp and inclined to kink; a straight, thin nose, with well-cut nostrils, a short upper lip, a surly mouth, and a square-cut chin, which showed plenty of pig-headedness, but very little strength.

Being thoroughly, soundly English—the Blundells dwelt in Kent ages before the Canterbury Pilgrims lowered the tone of the county—he possessed a keen sense of the ridiculous, but no sense of humor, and he was lucky enough to be able to convince himself that whatever he did, however low, foolish or mean, was done from motives in which none of these three things found a place. He was no more sensual than any other normal man, and no less. He was, at the same time, just as selfish, and there was no man on earth he got on better with, or appreciated more, than Evelyn Blundell.

His moral sense was sound. Not for a moment, however keen the temptation, would he have rendered any

good girl the worse for knowing him. Not for a moment, however strong the invitation, would he have tampered with the wife of a friend. With the wife of a man with whom he was not on terms of friendship it was, of course, a totally different matter. In that he was a sailor, and consequently away from his wife for long periods of time, he regarded himself as exempted from a too-nice faithfulness.

In short, it is easy to claim for him the right to be called "a good chap" by men, and "a dear" by women.

As he neared the end of his homeward voyage, and read the bright, loving, trusting, eager letters of the little woman who was his wife, written from the tiny village in which she was counting the minutes that brought him nearer, all the sentimentality, all the desire to make a martyr of himself, bubbled up and stirred what was best in his nature. He read the bright, thrilling letters with tingling cheeks and dim eyes, and, casting them back over the three years' separation, called himself blackguard and beast, and other exaggerated terms of abuse. Implicitly believing that every word she wrote was true—was she not the woman he had married?—he worked himself into the not-altogether-unenjoyable belief that he was unworthy to polish her little shoes.

The beauty of the nights, the sentimental songs of the sailors, the "England-Home-and-Mother" feeling that infected every man on board, had naturally something to do with it. However that may be, he continually found himself—and reveled in the discovery—standing apart from his brothers, chewing the cud, between the whiffs of his cigar, of bitterness and shame. He found himself lying awake at night, and going without his usual amount of liquor.

"Poor little girl," he repeated to himself, over and over again, looking at his wife's photograph in the moonlight; "poor little girl, how she loves me! What kind of man am I that she should adore me as she does? The three years I have been away

must have appeared six to her. Yet, to me, it seems only yesterday. I've put in an excellent time, too, and done myself credit. What am I to say to her—a little woman so white, so pure, so faithful? It's all rot to suppose that because I've not been particular she ought not to have been. I am only a man, whereas she's my wife. But I rather wish— Oh, Lord! that's the worst of this beastly service! What's a fellow to do? Poor little girl, poor little girl! What a rum thing it all is! It's rough luck—but there it is."

XIX

Two telegrams were handed to Blundell when H.M.S. *Gargantua* put in. They ran as follows:

"Welcome, a thousand times. BETTY."

And

"Welcome; come to me at once. MILLY."

The first, which he had expected, gave him very little pleasure for that reason.

The second, totally unexpected, sent his heart beating half-a-dozen strokes faster to the minute.

Before he got into the train for London, he wired answers to them both. To the first:

"Safe and sound. Dying to see. Business keeps me to-morrow London. With you day after. EVELYN."

And to the second:

"Thousand thanks. With you to-morrow lunch. EVELYN."

"Come at once—Milly," he said to himself as the train started. "What on earth——?"

Much against his will, a smile crept over his face, and he fingered the telegram with a sense of pleasurable excitement. "Surely, a little indiscreet! Milly's taken the flat, by a deuced curious coincidence, and, I expect, knows that Betty is in the country, pining to see me. It must be something very urgent to make her ask one to go at once, when one's wife—illness, I should think; or else some-

thing has leaked out! Oh, my rotten past! Will those wild oats never die?"

He said these things tragically enough; but the smile remained.

"Of course, past or no past, I couldn't possibly refuse to lunch with her. In a sense—in fact, of course—it's business. I hate lying! No doubt something has gone wrong with the flat, and I am wanted to see about it. My own, sweet little Betty! 'Come at once—Milly.' Poor little girl! How glad she'll be to get me back again after all these years! 'Come at once—Milly.' I wonder if she's changed at all? She's quite a little woman now. What a heap we shall have to talk about! 'Come at once—Milly.' Miles from the station, eh? That's it, and no sea in sight. Beastly sea, how I loathe it! 'Come at once—Milly.' It makes me sick to think I sha'n't be able to look her fair and square in the eyes. I wonder if any of the others would suffer as I do under these circumstances? They've put in a jolly sight better time—I mean, been very much worse than I have during these three years. I suppose I'm a bit too sensitive. I suppose there are not a dozen chaps in the service who would understand the horrible shame I feel. 'Come at once—Milly.' Gad, I wish I'd run on the straight. She has all my love, though. No one has ever, or can ever, share that with her, the darling! What wonderful hair she's got! And how exquisitely beautiful and refined and dainty she is! 'Come at once—Milly.' It's a great nuisance not being able to dash off to her to-night. I *do* think Milly— However, poor old Mill, perhaps I can help her. She's in trouble. One couldn't possibly be hard-hearted enough to pay no attention to such a telegram as that. 'Come at once—Milly.' And I have been looking forward all these years to seeing Betty directly I landed. I wonder what's going on in town? By gad, I'll give myself a ripping little dinner—change of diet will do me good—and do a theatre or a music-hall. Something bright, with some good, swinging songs, will help to drive away these

fearful blues. I don't think I've ever been so down on my luck in my life. A music-hall, I think, and I'll see if I can't find a pal. Might possibly drop in to supper at the Continental, afterward. Must do something to buck myself up. After all, what have I ever done that every one else doesn't do? 'Come at once—Milly.' Dearest little wife! Wife! What a lovely word it is! The most perfect, the most pregnant with meaning in the whole English language. 'Come at once—Milly.' Country's looking nice, by gad! Glorious place, England, although it's so frightfully effete. Heavens! to get to town once more, and hear the old familiar roar! I'm looking forward like a kid to getting inside a hansom again! 'Come at once—Milly.' Although, of course, I'm frightfully sick at being prevented like this from steaming down to Betty. My sweetheart! My own little wife. 'Come at once—Milly.' . . . What a funny thing it was—Cator dying two weeks after Betty and I were married. I wonder if I should have married Milly if I hadn't met Betty? I don't suppose so. Men never marry the women they— And yet, she's a good sort. It was all because Cator was such a brute. She couldn't do without sympathy. The world would think pretty badly of us, I suppose. But they could never understand the feeling that inspired me. It was wrong, of course, but at least it gave her an interest in life, and nobody ever found out. But I'm glad I was safely married. 'Come at once—Milly.'

Blundell took his wife's photograph out of his breast-pocket, and sat for a long time looking at it in a wistful way. Many miles were passed; many little farms tucked away in the creases of the hills, many golden fields of still corn, many hedges loaded with leaf, many villages, bustling lazily, fell behind, the engine beating out a refrain to which "Come at once—Milly," fitted in constantly, before he found that he was looking at the photograph upside down.

He whisked it round quickly, with

a slight addition to his color, kissed it, and put it back in his pocket. "Come at once—Milly."

Sighing heavily, he shook open a paper, and ran his eye down the entertainment advertisements. "Come at once—Milly."

"A romantic drama in four acts," he read. "That means armor, cymbals, silly fights. No, thanks. 'A new and original farce in three.' The new and original references to mothers-in-law and twins, I heard in my childhood. Not at any price—not even on paper. 'Shakespeare.' Never can hear what they're saying. 'Pavilion.' That's good enough! And one needn't put in an appearance before ten. Wish Betty were in town! How ripping to go together! I hate enjoying myself alone. Not that I shall enjoy it; I feel much too—sick with myself. . . . 'Come at once—Milly.'"

XX

As his hansom cleared the station yard and made its way into the street, Blundell forgot both women—his wife and the other. London leaped up in front of him—London, with its peculiar smell, its peculiar noises, its peculiar buildings, its peculiar traffic, its peculiar sameness, the ugliest, worst-kept, worst-swept, narrowest, most interesting city in the world.

It was half-past six in the evening. There was no wind, no breeze. The air, churned over and over during the day, was dead and thick. The pavements were black with tired, spiritless people making their way home after work. Omnibuses, loaded on top, crawled in long lines up and down the congested streets. Shrill-voiced newsboys shouted, the insistent bells of motor-cars rang sharply, the never-ending crunching of wheels, the shuffling of thousands of feet, filled Blundell's ears like a familiar song. As he approached Northumberland avenue and the Metropole, the sharp notes of coach horns made him lean eagerly forward, and a peal of the bells of St.

Martin's brought a tightness to his throat.

Blundell felt that it was worth while going away from London for three years to plunge back into it again. Its very ugliness impressed him. Its very narrowness struck him as curiously homely. Beyond a new building here and there, or an old one renovated and cleaned, everything was the same. The sounds were the same, the people were the same, the very smell was the same. As he passed rapidly along to his hotel, London got into his blood, and he felt an overwhelming desire—the desire that fills every man who has known it well, and been away from it for some time—to become one of the great crowd again.

With a sense of home upon him, he paid the cabman, booked a room, left his luggage with the hotel porters, hastily washed, and made his way into the street.

The day had been very hot. The sun, still warm, touched the tops of the buildings with a thin finger of gold, and made all the higher windows seem on fire.

He saluted in a shamefaced, sudden, self-conscious manner as he passed under the ineffably inadequate statue of Nelson, and made his way to the Haymarket. He threw a shilling to a crossing-sweep whose face he recognized, and stopped for a moment to read the bill outside the Haymarket Theatre. He went into the old-fashioned shop at the top of the street to get some cigarettes, and, smoking one with rare enjoyment—they were no better than the ones with which his case was filled, but they were the ones he used to smoke—swung on quickly to his club in Piccadilly.

The porter looked up from a half-penny racing paper and said, "Good evening, sir." A member who had lunched with him the day before he went away, three years ago, gave him a "How-do?" as though he had seen him a few hours since. The waiter in the smoking-room answered his "Good evening" politely, uninterestedly, and brought him a whiskey-and-soda. There

were the same faces, the same pictures, the same papers, containing pretty much the same matter. Nothing had altered; everything was the same. In ten minutes, it seemed ridiculous, impossible that he had been away three years. Three days seemed nearer the mark, or three minutes. With a curious, uncomfortable feeling, he went into the billiard-room. The two men who were playing when he left were still playing. He would have sworn that both were dressed in exactly the same clothes. He sat down and tried to imagine that he had really been on the Mediterranean. He tried to recall the sounds, the scents. He couldn't. He tried to remember the sing-songs on board under the deep sky in the moonlight. He couldn't.

"It's a dream," he said to himself. "I've been lunching at the Berkeley, and have been away only a couple of hours."

His cigarette went out, and he dived into his pocket for his match-box. He felt two pieces of thin paper. With some surprise he pulled them out. They were telegrams, one signed "Betty," the other "Milly." He read them with interest. "Queer!" he thought. "Why do they say welcome, and want me to go at once, as though I had been away? I saw them both a few hours ago."

Then he shook himself, and laughed. "Lord!" he said, under his breath, "what a quaint city it is! I believe they must wash the streets down every morning with the waters of Lethe!"

XXI

BLUNDELL had dined well, and his second cigar was more excellent than the first. He watched two turns, from his stall at the Alhambra, with some amusement—one devoted to a fat lady in blue tights who sang sentimental songs with a strong cockney accent, and the other to a troupe of Swiss acrobats, with greasy hair and oily smiles—and then went up to the promenade, rather hoping he might meet some one

he knew. He had begun to feel strangely lonely and insignificant.

The dining-room of the Metropole had been well filled. He knew no one. They seemed to be mostly Americans, judging from the queerness of their clothes and hair, and people from Birmingham and Liverpool, judging from the commonplace cut of their faces.

After searching, without success, among the heterogeneous crowd which moved backward and forward, for a face he knew, he leaned over the velvet back of the seats, and listened, with a queer sense of being a mere atom, a unit, to the orchestra.

A selection from "I Pagliacci" rose above the babble of tongues, and its passion, its jealousy, its despair, touched the note of sentimentality within him, and made him long eagerly to see his wife again. Yet, as he listened, and as he conjured up in his mind the face and figure of his beautiful little wife, the only words the ringing music sang to him were, "Come at once—Milly—Milly."

"How do you do?" said a soft voice at his elbow.

He started, instinctively raising his hat, and looked at the speaker.

Her face was rouged, and her hair was dyed. The shape of the face was delicately oval, and pathetically girlish and sweet, and the mouth was sensitive and refined. He gazed at her a full minute, and then, with astonishment and pity, cried, "Good heavens, you!"

The woman stared at him, unrecognizingly. Then her mouth suddenly quivered, and her eyes fell.

"Mr. Blundell!"

He caught up her white-gloved hand, and shook it warmly, rather overdoing a certain careless *bonhomie* in his endeavor to soften the shock he felt his words had conveyed.

"Come and sit down somewhere, and let us talk. I was hideously lonely a minute ago. It's delightful to see you again. It's five years. But I should know you anywhere. You haven't changed at all."

She followed him in silence. They talked a little, but most of the time Blundell looked at her with deep pity in his eyes. Finally, his heart so weighed with the tragedy of it all, he said to her:

"If I were to—to lend you eight sovereigns, would you stay away from here for a week?"

"Yes."

He hurriedly slipped the money into her hands, and made his way quickly through the crowd, down the wide stairs and into the street.

"What brutes we are!" he cried in his heart, "what brutes!"

XXII

WITH his ante-breakfast cup of tea, Blundell found a letter from his wife.

"Darling old boy," it read, "welcome, a thousand welcomes! I have no words to tell you how disappointed I was to get your telegram. I'm afraid I shall be obliged to cry myself to sleep to-night. But, of course, business must be attended to, mustn't it? Bother business! I want you to find this little note when you wake, so if I wish to catch the early post I must fly with it to the post-office. But I have just time to say what you already know—that I love you more than ever, and just long to see you with all my might. Wire me your train in any case, sweetheart."

Blundell kissed the little note several times, and repeated to himself, a pleasant warmth pervading him: "Dear little Betty! how she loves me! how she loves me! I'll get a red tie, I think. Milly likes me in a red tie."

After his bath, having thoroughly wetted his hair, and parted it with immense precision in the centre of his head, he noticed with a sort of shock that no gold gleamed among the silver which lay, with a pipe-knife, a cigar-cutter, a silver cigarette-case, and the key of his room, on the dressing-table.

"What the devil——!"

The piquant face and smart figure of the girl he had met the previous evening floated in front of him.

"Ass!" he said aloud, "consummate ass! Now I sha'n't be able to get those cigars, and the present I wanted to give Betty."

Having started the day badly, the tactics of his stud—next to a woman the most unnecessarily elusive institution on earth—didn't improve his temper. As he groped about under the dressing-table for it, his words were picturesque and ingenious, and when, after a quarter of an hour's hunt on his hands and knees, the lost article rolled out of the bottom of his trousers, they became positively phosphorescent.

At breakfast, his eggs were hard-boiled, and his coffee distinctly muddy. At the next table an American, with a more than usually horrid accent, read his mail aloud to his wife, and with blatant exultation announced to the whole world that, by the sale of certain shares, he was the richer by several hundred thousand dollars. Finally, the waiter upset the milk over the table, and Blundell, knowing that he would have paid the ground rent of the hotel for a year when he settled for the breakfast he had not eaten, rose, and stumped angrily downstairs to the smoking-room.

It was half-past nine. It was necessary to kill more than three hours' time. Blundell felt no desire to leave the hotel. London was no longer in his blood. It was all too hopelessly lonely. No man who has been a somebody can stand being nobody—nothing, an atom. He loathed the place, its crowd, its din, its ugliness.

With an air of aggression, he lighted a pipe and collected all the morning papers he could lay his hands on. The first one, a half-penny paper, made him scoff loudly. It was composed of snippets of snobbery, badly worded letters from readers about such trivial matters as the post-office, the linnet that sang at midnight, and the methods of an effete government, and a leader, obviously written by a

precocious provincial journalist, on a subject that it was impertinent of him to discuss. The only thing in it that arrested his attention was a notice of a play by a leading playwright produced the previous night at a leading West End theatre. The writer devoted the whole of his space to proving how much better he could have written the play himself, and mentioned in his last line that it was only saved from being hissed off the stage by the actors.

For the fun of the thing, Blundell read the notices in all the other papers, and was amused to see that none of them in the least agreed with the half-penny writer, or with anybody else. A big daily, in devoting two columns to exuberant eulogies of the play, mentioned that, alas! it was almost wrecked by the acting. A third paper stated, sweepingly, that both the play and the acting were beneath contempt. None of the critics made the least attempt to criticize, but each aired some personal grievance, and did his best to find fault.

As time went on, Blundell's anger and wounded pride slipped away, and a kind of excitement took their place. He began to finger his tie, and ask himself again and again what on earth Milly could possibly want to see him about.

"Women are such extraordinary people," he said to himself; "they never forget. Their minds are like the boxes children keep under lock and key—filled with the utterly unessential things. They will lose their engagement-rings with three fairly respectable stones, and experience very little regret. But they wouldn't part with a rose given to them by some disreputable lover for all the gold of Ind. . . . Those were jolly days, by gad! Good old Milly! But what the dickens does she want to see me about? I suppose I ought to catch the train down to Betty to-night. Otherwise, I'd suggest taking Milly to a theatre. I'd like to do a theatre with her again, just for auld lang syne."

XXIII

BLUNDELL walked as far as Hyde Park Corner. London was wearing its usual Midsummer appearance. The sun poured down upon Piccadilly. The omnibuses, loaded on top, made their way slowly up the hill. Cabs, empty, and likely to remain so, crawled, like tired flies, close to the curb, wearing holland covers, with fringes hanging over the front, and many of the horses wore bonnets. Most of the clubs were closed for new decorations.

At Hyde Park Corner, Blundell got into a cab, and drove to his flat in the Addison Road. A few actors ambled about the Row, uneasily, and the dried grass in Kensington Gardens was spotted with the white frocks of nursemaids and children. Parliament had risen, and London, more crowded than ever, was in that deplorable state that is known as "empty."

Almost every shop in that strange and giddy and dangerous thoroughfare, Kensington High street, was undergoing its annual Summer sale, and hosts of women of all ages crowded round the shops, peering knowingly at the windows. Hammersmith sent its contingent; and West Kensington, poor but proud; Chelsea, and the lost regions on the wrong side of the water. Even to Blundell, there was a subtle pathos in the sight. He, also, knew the difficulty of keeping up appearances with very little to do it with.

His heart beat more quickly as he neared Uxbridge Mansions, Addison Gardens. He could remember the glow of pride which spread over him when he drove up to them with Betty, after their honeymoon. Their windows were small, but the bricks were red, and the bells were electric, and the board in the hall contained one honorable, and one surgeon-general. Betty thought everything very charming, and he remembered, with a laugh, that she put merely "Uxbridge Mansions, W.," on her note-paper, and left "Addison Gardens, Hammersmith" out. It didn't do away with

the fact that it was a bare three-shilling cab fare from the theatres. They had been very happy there together for three months.

The flat was on the third floor. There was a new porter in the old porter's clothes. Blundell knew it by the sack under each of his arms, and by the trousers, which, although turned up, were still too long by a couple of inches.

He instinctively felt for his latch-key. It seemed absurd to ring the bell of his own place like any stranger.

He asked for Mrs. Cator, and was shown into the little drawing-room he had taken such a pride in. He stood on the rug in front of the fireplace—it was a bargain from one of Hampton's sales—and surveyed the room. His thoughts flew back to the morning, several days before his marriage, when, with his best man, he had hung the pictures, pipe in mouth, coat off, sleeves rolled up, and had arranged the furniture, which Betty had afterward rearranged in the usual woman's way.

One of the pictures was crooked. With a lump of sentimentality in his throat, he crossed the room, and put it straight with the tip of his finger. The thin-legged writing-desk he had given Betty on her birthday—the first birthday, so far as he was concerned—was open. Many of Mrs. Cator's letters were lying upon it. In a pigeon-hole he saw a number of letters in his wife's handwriting. He took them up, and kissed them. Hearing a step in the passage, he slipped them, with a smile, into his pocket, and turned expectantly toward the door.

Milly Cator came forward with outstretched hand. "Evelyn," she said, with a ring of pleasure in her honest voice, "how nice to see you again!"

Slightly chilled at the almost sisterly greeting, Blundell took her hand. "Thanks," he said. "It is good to be home."

He had rehearsed a very different scene. He quite expected that she would have flung her arms around his

neck with tears, and he had intended to kiss her on her cheek, and pat her shoulder, and talk in a fatherly way of "what might have been." As it was, Milly stood before him, beaming with health and cheerfulness, almost aggressively sane. He felt aggrieved. He felt as most of us feel when, upon opening a dainty parcel, tied carefully, sealed here and there, and marked "Fragile," "With care," a sample of patent medicine is discovered.

"How well and brown you are looking, dear old boy!" said Milly, sitting down. "You've evidently had a very good time."

Blundell assumed a woebegone expression. "Does a man usually have a good time when he is away for three years from the woman he loves better than his life—only three months married to her? I've had a beastly time."

Mrs. Cator's face flushed slightly, and her eye wandered uneasily to the pigeon-hole of the writing-desk.

"Oh," she said, "yes, yes, of course. I forgot Betty for a moment."

"I have never forgotten Betty for an instant," said Blundell. "When a man marries for love, you know, penal servitude is not worse than separation."

There was a slight pause. Mrs. Cator, unable to clear her mind of some gladness that the man she had expected to wait for her freedom should have married a woman so unworthy as Betty, wondered what he would say if he could see the bundle of letters.

Blundell, not altogether with intention, began to frame other sentences likely to give pain to the woman who seemed to have forgotten that he had behaved badly to her.

The temptation to put the letters in Blundell's hands, and so, while killing his love for his wife, very possibly regain some of it herself, was very strong with Milly; because, being the man for whom she had sacrificed something more than her self-respect, Mrs. Cator still loved Blundell. It is the way of women.

"You'll stay to luncheon, of course," she said, brightly.

"I can't; thanks very much," said Blundell, who had made arrangements to do so; "I want to catch the afternoon train into the country. You see, if I hadn't—if I you hadn't—I should have gone down last night. But I wanted to be of use to you."

Mrs. Cator fidgeted with her fingers. "It was kind of you to wait," she said. "The fact is, Betty wanted me to see you to get you to take down a parcel—quite a small one—of things I have been getting for her in town. As you are in such a hurry, perhaps I had better get it for you at once."

"Thanks," said Blundell, rising, and opening the door.

Again Mrs. Cator's eyes traveled in the direction of the pigeon-hole. After a brief, sharp struggle, she rose with a smile, and went to the door.

"How glad she will be to get you back again!" she said, as she went out.

Blundell returned to the rug in front of the fireplace, in an extremely irritable frame of mind. For Milly's sake, he had stayed one night away from his wife, had been put to the expense of a hotel bill, extra cab-fares, and had thrown away eight guineas of his hard-earned money from purely mistaken ideas of philanthropy.

"And we might have had such a jolly afternoon and evening!" he said to himself.

In the little dining-room of the flat Mrs. Cator, with the tears streaming down her cheeks, spread out a telegram she had received the previous morning. It was from Betty, and ran as follows:

"Wire to Evelyn and ask him to see you to-morrow urgently. I do not want him down to-night or to-morrow. Keep him. Very important. Be sure you wire me the train he decides to come by."

With a bitter exclamation, Mrs. Cator opened the railway guide, and then, drawing a telegraph form from its case, wrote:

"He is leaving by the two-fifty-five.

"MILLY."

This she gave to her maid, with the request that it might be sent at once. She then went to her bedroom, made a parcel of some hair-nets Betty had written for, carefully bathed her eyes with a wet sponge, and returned, studiously cheerful, to the drawing-room.

"Here it is," she said, holding out the parcel. "Are you sure you haven't time to stay to luncheon?"

"Quite sure, thanks," said Blundell; "I must get back to the Metropole, and put my things together. Glad to see you looking so well and happy."

"Oh," said Mrs. Cator, "I was never happier in my life, or so well. Perhaps I shall see something of you both before your leave is up."

"Thanks, I hope so. Well—good-bye!"

"Good-bye!"

As the outer door closed upon him, Mrs. Cator slipped into a chair, with her hands over her eyes. "He's forgotten!" she cried.

Blundell put up his stick to hire a cab, flung the little parcel upon the seat, and got in after it, and slammed the doors together angrily.

"She's forgotten," he thought.

XXIV

BLUNDELL rose from the chair by the window of his bedroom in the Metropole. Big Ben struck nine. His bags lay open, and his clothes and shirts lay scattered about the room. He had stopped in the middle of his packing to read Betty's letters to her friend.

He had kissed them again before he commenced reading them. He felt the need of some balsam to his vanity. He didn't own it to himself, but his interview with Milly Cator had wounded his pride. The letters would tell him how keenly he had been missed by one dear little woman, and how deeply he was loved.

As he read, luncheon unthought of, dinner unthought of, the veins of anger, disgust, contempt and self-pity

stood out in knots upon his forehead. The references to himself wounded him far more terribly than the indiscreet analysis of herself. This made him feel only righteously indignant, and utterly sorry for himself, although it elevated him in his own eyes, into the position of a man of high morality and unimpeachable rectitude.

Cramped and tired, he rose from his chair by the window, being unable to see. The light had faded.

For some time he stood in the little, stiffly furnished room in the dark. He knew that he had arrived at the end of a road which branched off in the shape of a Y into two others. Along one of these he could see himself and Betty, together, yet alone. Along the other there was no Betty to be seen.

It was a colossal moment. And for minutes he allowed himself the pleasure of standing outside himself, and looking at himself with the eyes of a friend—a friend who understood. Instead of the selfish, sensual, commonplace, sentimental, easy-going person he knew himself to be, he saw a good-looking man, white all through, bleeding from a deep wound in his heart—a wound inflicted by the wife he had so devotedly and faithfully loved—a wound no human hand could ever heal.

From the street below, a quick, metallic echo of hoofs came nearer, then died away, to be followed immediately by others. The sound of trains, an ugly sound, came also. In the passage outside his door, bells rang, and sometimes a key was pushed into the lock of other doors. Steps passed and repassed, muffled by the thick carpet.

Blundell, filled with pity, reentered himself. "My God, what have I done to deserve this!—what? what? I have never quite lied to her. She has lied to me from the beginning of all things. I have never been actually unfaithful to her; I've only been badly tempted, and have fallen. She has been worse than unfaithful to me for three years. She is leading a life a thousand times

more immoral than that poor devil of a woman I met last night."

With a sudden movement, he switched on the electric light, drew his chair beneath it, and with blasphemy on his lips, and a desire to punish in his heart, went on reading.

XXV

"I SLEPT the greater part of the afternoon away," the next letter ran. "If nothing exciting is going forward, I always lay myself out for an afternoon's sleep. It is a sure way to prevent lines. When I say sleep, I don't mean a nap on a couch; that is really of little use. I mean a long, steady sleep from luncheon till tea-time, in bed, undressed as though it were night-time, with the blinds down, the window open, and the air playing on my face.

"That's one of the great disadvantages of being a mother. Unless the exchequer allows of an excellent nursery, far away at the other end of the house, a woman cannot get her proper sleep. Thank heaven, I am not a mother. I think a child would completely ruin my life. I have nothing of the maternal instinct. I never could stand a doll, even.

"But take the little girl in this cottage. There you have a born mother. Nature marked her out for a mother from her earliest infancy. But I do not understand such women. My marriage with Evelyn was merely one of convenience. You know Evelyn slightly, and therefore, no doubt, you think that he is a most excellent specimen of English manhood. I dare say you are right; in fact, I am sure you are. He is an excellent specimen of English manhood, or any other manhood, for that matter. I can well imagine that he would make a very useful kind of neighbor. If one flattered him sufficiently he would run one's little messages, roll one's lawn, take one's dog for walks, and make a cheerful and fairly efficient fourth at a game of bridge.

"But he is not the ideal man to have

married, believe me. He takes everything as a matter of course, and, having got it, either sleeps or goes his way, whistling 'Annie Laurie,' or an air from the latest musical comedy. He wants his own way in everything, and nags when he doesn't get it. He demands a constant supply of good food, and grows horribly sulky and bad-tempered unless his vanity is fed at stated times also. He plays a good deal more enthusiastically than he works, and, being utterly devoid of a sense of humor, puts the wrong interpretation on badinage. And the worst of it is, I still live in an atmosphere of small means. Making both ends meet is not a pastime I care about. My *métier* is spinsterhood with unlimited money. I ought to travel, and see the world. I am not cultured, but I am intelligent, and that's a strange thing for a woman. Every one has a 'kink,' you know mine. I revel in it. But for all that, I am very capable of enjoying anything that is lofty. I feel that I could write books if I took the trouble. I should write about myself, of course. Most women do, one way or another. And because I can't be bothered to write books, I write these long, indiscreet letters to you. It's very unwise. But, you see, I can't very well write them to my mother or to Evelyn. My mother would be interested and horror-stricken; and I think Evelyn would hurt me. I think he would rise up with superb righteousness and hit me. You see, he is so essentially English. He considers that, being a man, he may do as he chooses, but that no wife has a right to be anything but a devoted idiot. It's a fine theory!

"I put in an excellent time this evening. My hero and I met again—you will never guess where. I don't mind a bit what the good woman downstairs may think, and so I asked him in after dinner. He came about nine o'clock. It was a gorgeous evening, very hot and still and breathless—just the kind of evening that helps me immensely. I put the lamp out and brought in three candles from the bedroom. I have no

stupid superstitions on the subject of three lights. I really think this caused the good woman more uneasiness than the fact that I was going to entertain a mere farmer. The impropriety part of it didn't appeal to her in the least. For me, 'a London lady,' to receive a country person was the point. I told her I wanted to ask him about the pensioners.

"I wore a soft, white, clinging gown, cut low at the neck, with short sleeves. I was 'discovered' lying on the sofa, under the window.

"He came in timidly. His mood had changed again. He was no longer just the delighted boy, or the man roused; he was the man in love.

"A man in love is always seen to the worst advantage. He sits in awkward positions, quiet, dull, sentimental. My monster was exactly like them all. I thought till this evening that it was impossible for him to look awkward. I was wrong. He not only looked more awkward than most men in love, but he looked more foolish.

"And yet, he was not uninteresting, because it was so palpably his first attack. I read to him for an hour. I chose Rossetti—not Dante Gabriel; his work is so mad, so tricky, so utterly unmeaning—but Christina. I read well for a woman. I understand the value of a semicolon. And, as I read, he sat and watched the movement of my lips, merely hanging on the sound of my voice. I might just as well have been reading the sorriest prose. I read because I had pretty well exhausted all topics of conversation.

"When I looked at him—I looked at him frequently—I could see a blaze in his eyes. I believe if I had put my hand on his, he would have seized me and kissed my breath away. I longed to do it. I longed, just as a child does when it is alone with a fire, to throw on a log and see the flare. But, my dear Milly, he has elevated me to the pedestal of a saint. I am no woman; I am a goddess! All men who love for the first time, all men of imagination, all unconscious poets, do this. Being just a woman, I like it, naturally. So

would you. Every Jill has her Jack, they say. But I believe the worshiper has the better time, until he has been disillusioned, and so ceases to worship. And, even then, it is the one who was worshiped who has the harder time. Ah, it is always the woman who pays!

"He bent over my hand when he was going, and kissed it lightly, with the simple grace and adoration of a schoolboy, and then hastened away.

"I took the candles into my bedroom, and undressed slowly. Honestly and truly, this man is the only one I have ever met who has come near to stirring what little power for loving there is in my heart. He is such a genuine soul. Indeed, he is a man at his best. I feel, at this moment, that I should like to go to the bank of some river, swim across it and back, and come out cleansed, just as much a woman as he is a man. Together, equally genuine, equally simple, equally human, equally in love, what a heaven would earth be for us!

"I think this is the only time in my life that I have wished painfully, with a sharp, hot pricking, that I could go back and begin all over again. I should be so different! I wonder, if I could go back, whether it would do any good. I am afraid not; I am afraid not, dear Milly.

"I think I hear him under the window of my sitting-room. I must go and see."

XXVI

"I CREPT across the creaking room gingerly, because my feet were slipperless, gathered my night-robe close, shook my hair away from my face, and peeped behind the curtain.

"The window was open. The moon, sitting in a sky as clear as water, surrounded by a thousand thousand stars, flooded the earth with her light. I could count the loose stones on the road. I could see every sleepy ear of corn to the right and left, and far in front of me. I could see every leaf in every tree, lying still in sleep against

the deep blue. They threw their shadows in front of them as though the sun and not the moon were shining. It was all quite still. I had a feeling that it would be unkind not to hold my breath, lest even my light breathing should waken everything. The beauty, the simplicity, the trustfulness of it all, made me forget for a little what brought me to the window.

"I heard a long sigh, and leaned slightly forward. There stood the man I wished I could love as no woman had ever loved a man before, leaning against a tree, looking up at my window.

"In a whisper the village clock struck one. Everything stirred slightly at the sound, murmured drowsily, and fell to sleep again.

"The moon shone directly into my window. I slipped from behind the curtain, and stood there in her light, with my hair all about my shoulders.

"I saw him spring a step forward, and stop. Across the stillness his breathing came to me—hot, quick, eager. My own heart raced. I felt as I had never felt in my life—a child, a girl, an ordinary sweet girl.

"Neither of us moved. I heard the quarter-hour strike. And then I said his name, faintly, once, twice and again. With his arms held out in front of him, with his eyes fixed on my face, he came slowly, slowly, until he stood under my window. I leaned over, and looked down at him, with my heart fluttering. I said his name again. And not like a man who knew what he was doing, he put his hands among the branches of the thick creeper on the wall, and came up to me, nearer, nearer. Our faces were close together. Our breath mingled, pantingly. He climbed a little higher, and sat upon the sill. Neither of us spoke. But presently his hands were on my shoulder, and I felt myself drawn forward. He held me tightly, and kissed my lips, my eyes, my forehead, my hair, again and again and again. It was the sweetest thing that had ever happened. For just that little time, I felt nearer to being a woman than ever

in my life. My arms were slipping round his neck when a bat flapped against my face. I gave a cry of alarm, and drew back into the room, and put my hands over my eyes. When I took them away I was alone.

"And then I flung myself on my bed, and cried myself to sleep."

XXVII

"To-day is the last of those I have to kill. I woke to it refreshed and rested. The episode of the first hour of the morning came back to me at once. But the feeling which the air, the moonlight, the sentiment, had given me, had departed. It only struck me as intensely funny. I was Betty Blundell, *née* Trevor, again. And I looked at myself standing in my night-robe and bare feet in the moonlight, allowing myself to be kissed by that dear, stupid boy, with astonishment. I laughed for minutes. But, at the same time, I had a lurking desire to thank my stars for the opportune arrival of that bat! He is a dear boy. I defy anybody to meet him and not feel a little tender about him. Goodness, how unwise it was!

"I found a letter from Evelyn waiting for me. He tells me they will put in this morning about midday for certain. Ah, well! thank heaven he will be going away again quite soon.

"I sent two wires by one of the children. I didn't want to see that inevitable smile flicker over that foolish woman's face at the post-office. One telegram was wifely, and welcomed Evelyn. The other you know, and I trust you have long since acted upon it. In fact, of course you have, for I received a telegram from Evelyn saying that he was putting up at the Metropole, and had business in London to-morrow. I wonder how well you knew him, my dear. I shall get you to tell me one of these days. He has often assured me, in his silly, sentimental way, that I am the only woman with whom he has ever been in love. I never believed him. I never believe

anything of that kind that any man tells me.

"And so I shall have to-day and most of to-morrow to kill yet!

"I know exactly what kind of a mood Evelyn is in—not so much because of his letter as because I know him well. He has worked himself into a state of terrific remorse over the little unfaithfulnesses of the last three years. And he is saying to himself, with an air of great enjoyment and well-simulated sincerity, 'I am not worthy, I am not worthy!' And, all the while, he is pining to know what you want to see him about! What a shallow, sentimental, posing, self-indulgent pig he is! I can see him as I write this. (It is six o'clock, and I am getting this ready to post at seven, so that you may have it in the morning. It will be my last letter in regard to this episode.) He is getting a shirt out of his case, and is carefully examining it to see whether it is stiff enough, shiny enough to wear. He will dress himself carefully, wet his hair in his usual way, dine, with a self-conscious smirk, in a high collar, and go to a music-hall with a big cigar. He will take more whiskey-and-soda than is quite good for him during the evening, and either go back to his hotel in a sickly, silly way, or not, as the case may be.

"His letter prepares me for a very uncomfortable time. These last three years have, I can see, only enhanced his selfishness, his coarseness—what he calls his affection—and his bad temper. Well, I suppose I mustn't grumble. I married with my eyes open. It was the only way out.

"Just before luncheon I received another letter—a very different one. It was brought by a boy, and was unaddressed. It was to be given to 'the lady.' I'll copy it out. It was very funny:

"'I love you! I have loved you since the world began. I can't live unless you are my wife. I want you, beloved. I have nothing to offer you but love—that's all; but it is the greatest love that man ever offered to a woman. You kissed me last night; my lips are still trembling. Let me find you again on your hill, with the sun

waiting behind you. I love you, and I have found you, after all.'

"I wish I could give you some idea of the writing—the great, honest, schoolboy writing—that shook with his eagerness. I wonder what he will say when I tell him that I am married, and that Evelyn arrives to-morrow.

"What do you think he will do? Will he hurt me, do you think? I remember I had a horrid dream in which leaves played a great part. My recollection of it is very hazy, but I believe he went mad, or something. However, even wild boys don't do that in these times. He will soon get over it, living as he does in the open air, and the incident will remain with him as pleasantly as it will with me.

"It's quite marvelous how quickly these days have gone. It seems a century ago that I used to sit and listen to Valentine Worthing. I am already fidgeting to get back to blessed London, and hear its murmur, and feel the pulse of it throbbing under my feet. What does a hansom look like? And how are they getting on with the new Walsingham House? And do the geraniums still hang outside the windows of the Berkeley? And is there any difference in the length of the skirt?

"Ten days? Oh, Milly, no, no! Ten solid years! My calendar lies to me. I am ten years older. I feel that everything in my dear London will be changed. Don't, don't tell me it has changed.

"There were so many pieces at the theatre I wanted to see. They will have been withdrawn ages ago, and forgotten; and new ones, with actors I never heard of, will have taken their places. I am sure my hair is streaked with gray. I shall be obliged, for the first time, to have it touched.

"I wish Evelyn would come. I wish I hadn't asked you to keep him in town another day. I no longer want anything to do with the farmer man. I want Evelyn. I want to coax him into leaving this place and going up to town. I want to be able to wake in the morning and hear the rumble of omnibuses, the jingle of cabs, the cries

of paper boys. Bond street is in my blood again. I ache for a sight of Bond street.

"Hurry Evelyn away. Don't keep him. Make him come to me. I don't suppose you care two raps about him, whatever happened in the old days. Be a friend, and send him to fetch me away.

"This place is eerie. I can't hear a sound, and there's nothing to do.

"But I suppose I must tell you what just happened. It wouldn't be fair not to, after all I have told you, would it?

"I waited until five o'clock, and then I went to the hill—that beastly hill—I hope for the last, last time.

"My young god was waiting there. The instant he caught sight of me a silly smile broke out round his mouth, and a strange look came into his eyes. He didn't come and meet me, and so save me the trouble of climbing to the top. He waited for me, looking more utterly foolish than any man I have ever seen.

"I was in no mood for girlishness. All desire to go on playing had faded. I wanted to get rid of him, and to think of London; to sit quietly, and try with closed eyes to conjure up the sounds and scenes of that great city.

"He opened his arms as I came to the top, and stood there, beaming, half-shy, half-bold, wholly idiotic.

"*'Beloved!'* he cried.

"I slipped aside, quickly.

"*'My dear boy, don't, please!'* I said, rather unkindly, I'm afraid. *'I've come only to thank you very much for helping me to pass the time till my husband came home. It has all been very jolly, and I hope that if ever you come to London you will look us up. I am sure that my husband will be only too glad to—'*

"I stopped because something in his eyes frightened me. He bent forward and looked at me for a moment, and his face lost all its color. Then he tottered, swayed like a big tree struck by lightning, and, to my immense surprise, fell flat on his face in the grass.

"I fled! It was most uncomfortable and unusual.

"Of course, it was unexpected for him, but what did he mean by being quite too ridiculous?

"I must hurry up if I want to catch the post, and I do want to, awfully. You will get this before you see Evelyn. Just make some excuse; give him those hair-nets you said you would send me, and didn't, and pack him off by the afternoon train. But please send me a wire. Do this for me, Milly, like a dear, and count on me for a similar act of friendship at any future time.

"Yours,

"BETTY."

XXVIII

THE following day was as hot in the country as it was in London. In the city the heat was annoying; in the country it was a joy.

Mrs. Blundell sang as she dressed. It was a pretty, birdlike voice, very true, very light, very well-tutored, but utterly without feeling.

She dressed carefully. It took her half an hour to decide which of her many frocks she should wear. She tried on one, and moved about the little, cramped room in it. She took it off, and tried on another. This she eventually discarded for the time, and went back for the first.

It was a white dress with baby ribbons. In slipping it over the head, one of the hooks caught in her hair-net. She fumbled patiently, deftly, with it for some moments, singing softly, and when the hook still refused to release itself, she stamped, and cried, sharply: "Bother everything that catches!"

She sang again when she had freed the hook by tearing her net.

Many times during breakfast she slipped to the window, and looked out toward the village for the boy who brought telegrams and butter, bacon and soap, from the conglomerate post-office. Each time she returned without having seen him, she sighed impatiently, and broke into a smile. Once or twice she flung her arms up, threw her head back, and cried under her breath, "London, London!"

She was arranging flowers in three colored vases, with glass legs, when a knock came at the door. She turned, eagerly.

"Come!" she said, dropping the flowers on the table.

Mrs. Weeks entered with a kind of deferential familiarity.

"Give me the telegram, Mrs. Weeks, quickly."

"There beant no tallygrum, mum," said Mrs. Weeks, with a smile.

Mrs. Blundell's hand fell to her side. She flushed angrily. "Oh, well, what is it, Mrs. Weeks, what is it?"

"I jest thought as how, mabbe, ye'd finished with your breakfus', mum," apologized the good and somewhat flustered woman.

Mrs. Blundell was too excited to be irritable for any length of time. She took up the flowers again, and smiled pleasantly. "I expect my husband to-day, Mrs. Weeks," she said, after a moment.

"Yes'm?"

In Mrs. Weeks's voice there was something of the interested sympathy which may always be noticed in the voices of women, whether they themselves are happily married or not, at the mention of the word husband. And she smiled warmly, and smirked a little, and sunk her voice a tone, romance oozing out of her every pore.

Mrs. Blundell smiled back, prettily, describing the woman, in her brain, as a hopeless fool.

"You must give us a very nice dinner, dear Mrs. Weeks. You must surpass yourself."

Mrs. Weeks blushed with pleasure. "Yes'm," she said. "'As 'e bin away fer long, mum?" she asked, after a pause.

"For three years."

"Moy, that's a fair slice!"

"Yes, it is a long time."

Mrs. Weeks picked up the end of her apron, and ran her finger slowly along the edges.

"Mabbe, ye'll be leavin' me now, mum?"

"Oh, dear, no, Mrs. Weeks," said Mrs. Blundell, with the emphatic in-

sincerity of the woman whose one desire is to be liked by everybody. "I adore this little place and its surroundings. We shall leave you only if my husband's business takes him to London."

London! London! The word echoed in her heart.

"Aye," replied Mrs. Weeks.

A step crunched below. Like a swallow, Mrs. Blundell again darted to the window, and looked eagerly out.

A wave of sympathy passed over Mrs. Weeks when she saw the look of disappointment on Betty Blundell's face. "Aye," she thought, packing the plates, "it must be foine to be loved loike that."

"Why the dickens doesn't he wire?" cried Mrs. Blundell, inwardly. "The fool!"

As Mrs. Weeks left the room, Mrs. Blundell seized the time-table, and for the tenth time looked up the trains from London. (London! London!) One arrived at 3:45. It was the first, unless he changed and waited three-quarters of an hour at a junction half-way, in which case he would be——

She looked at her traveling clock. "No, he's missed it."

The second one came in at half-past seven. "Good heavens!" she cried, "what a frightful time to fill! I do think Milly might have played the game. She got my letter this morning. What cats women are!"

A hundred times during the remainder of the day, Mrs. Blundell sprang up from the sofa, and went to the window. A hundred times she cried out, "Why doesn't he wire? why doesn't he come? Oh, this dull place!"

A hundred times she took up a book, and, allowing her thoughts to wander, conjured up the noises, the bustle, the undercurrent of London. (London! London!)

Mrs. Cator's telegram was handed to her in the afternoon. Betty Blundell rejoiced. But a restlessness still pervaded her. At seven o'clock, unable to sit still, to stand still, to read, to think, she started off to walk along the road which led to the station.

No telegram had come from Evelyn. The postman delivering the evening post had gone. There was no letter from Evelyn.

Telling herself that her husband was planning a surprise, Mrs. Blundell remained on the road till half-past eight, till nine, till half-past nine.

The sun went down in fiery silence. The harvest moon rose placidly. Birds chattered of their day's doings, and one by one fell asleep. The faint breeze, which had been teasing the grasses, grew tired, too. Even the gnats went home. Little Betty Blundell was alone.

The stillness got upon her nerves. With quick, angry steps, she returned to the cottage. Evelyn had missed the last train.

The dinner had been laid some time. The heat of the lamp had made the flowers—pansies, pinks, and sweet peas—hang limp. Mrs. Weeks had spent much time and thought in their arrangement. She had placed others on the mantelpiece, in vases collected from her own Sunday sitting-room. Her daughter had placed a big bowl filled with wild flowers on the dressing-table in the bedroom. With clean hands, the mother and her daughter had tidied up the room, packed the collection of books Mrs. Blundell had brought with her, in a little pile at the foot of the sofa, and tied the backs of the chairs up with clean antimacassars, trimmed with a staring blue ribbon. The little table Mrs. Blundell used to write upon had, also, been the subject of their earnest thought. The pens were arranged in parallel lines; the note-paper placed tidily on the blotting pad; the excellent writing-case—Blundell's birthday present—closed and fastened.

Mrs. Blundell came into the room, and flung her hat on to the sofa. The books toppled over with a clatter. She crossed to the writing-table, dashed the pens here and there, disarranged the note-paper, and flung open the writing-case. Then, snatching the flowers out of their vases, she pitched them out of the window. They lay trembling upon the road.

Mrs. Weeks tapped at the door.

"What is it?" cried Mrs. Blundell.

"If you please, mum, dinner has been cooked this half-hour. I'm afraid the chickens is all frizzled up."

"I don't want any dinner," said Mrs. Blundell. "Go away."

Leaving the perspiring woman in the middle of the room with her mouth open, Mrs. Blundell went out again and slammed the door.

XXIX

EARLY in the morning, furiously angry, Mrs. Blundell sent a telegram to her husband, and prepaid the reply. What right had he to stay at the Metropole, while she had to put up with two tiny, impossible rooms, in an out-of-the-way hole in the country? It was unjust; it was ridiculous. She was there, she argued, with dabs of angry color on her cheeks, only at his especial request. All this time, she might have been in London, or near London—at any rate, in civilization—having a good time.

At midday, a telegram and a note were brought up to her. The telegram was from Evelyn Blundell; the note from John Ashley.

"Coming some time to-day,"

ran the first.

The second contained these eleven words:

"Meet me on the hill this evening for the last time."

Anger left Mrs. Blundell. Determination took its place—a determination to get Blundell to take her away—to London, to Brighton, to Marlow, to Dieppe, anywhere away from the country—where there were people, things to dress for, things to see; a determination to make him pay for not having hurried to her side.

And she could make him pay, she said to herself, with a triumphant smile, in which there was not a little cruelty. She knew her husband well. She knew exactly the temper of him,

the nature of him. Ah, yes, he should be made to pay!

She laughed as she thought about it, and, as she laughed, a song came back to her lips, and her eyes sparkled, and she moved about the room like a fairy, as slight, as exquisitely finished, as fresh and girlish as one of Romney's "Lady Hamiltons."

She laughed a rippling laugh of amusement as she re-read John Ashley's little note. Yes, it would be good fun to see him again. After all, he was an unfledged man. He still existed as a subject for experiments, and it would be interesting to see what manner of mood he was in.

But she had plenty to do before the evening. Whether she ultimately decided on Brighton, Dieppe, St. Malo or London, dress was a difficulty. She would, she decided, run through her wardrobe, and see how she stood—decide which dresses would pass muster as they were, which could be made to pass muster with a little manipulation, and which would have to be replaced.

She gave little thought to her outstanding bills at the dressmaker's. After all, Blundell couldn't expect to get everything for nothing. And so, in the best of spirits, she spent a large portion of the morning and afternoon trying on her frocks, and peering critically at them, patting them here and there, and making notes on a sheet of writing-paper.

And she sang the while, as a bird sings, and flung her arms up gaily at the thought of leaving the country she so heartily disliked. Like a child, she even stood and looked out at the magnificent panorama, spread in front of the window.

Yet, after all, she had put in a fairly good time, she thought. John Ashley was very new. He had given her some excellent fun. He had proved to her, almost too convincingly, the fact that she had lost none of her power.

The evening came, as evenings have a knack of doing. She had been longer over her dress parade than she

had intended to be. Evelyn would be in the cottage before she could return from the hill. It pleased her to think that he would be upset at not finding her waiting to give him welcome. She even dawdled a little in giving directions to Mrs. Weeks as to dinner, and, for the same purpose, made her way quite slowly through the fields.

She had no eyes for the delicate beauty of the evening, for the rich coloring of the corn, for the splashes in the hedges, for the whispers of the shaking grass, for the loud cantata of the birds.

"St. Malo, Dieppe, or London?" she asked herself, over and over again. "It's a bad time of year for London, but there are the theatres, and there's the Exhibition—that huge patch of gravel and painted canvas, popular chocolates and popular bands. But *there* there are people—people!"

She looked at her watch, resting one pretty foot on the lower step of a stile. By driving in the cart, Evelyn would by then be at the cottage. She laughed as she imagined his disappointed face.

Against the sky, erect and very still, stood Ashley, arms folded, chin low, watching her gravely as she went up the hill. The expression in his eyes was curiously cynical, curiously bitter.

With a kind of shock, Mrs. Blundell noticed that the youthful look she had so admired in him had gone. There were lines about his eyes and mouth, a peculiar slope about his shoulders.

He made no movement as she came nearer. Bare-headed, there he stood, with a never-changing expression, like a man turned into a statue. For the first time in her life, Mrs. Blundell felt insignificant, commonplace. She felt small and ignoble, by the side of this cold, impassive man, and all kinds of ridiculously feeble remarks surged in her brain.

"Good evening," she said, finally, with a meaningless laugh she hated herself for. "What a beautiful evening!"

John Ashley merely continued looking at her, silently.

"We have certainly been very lucky in the weather," she added, after a most uneasy pause. "Your crops will be very good, won't they?"

Again, she paused. Still Ashley remained silent, with his eyes going over her slowly.

She felt that he could see into her heart, and was aware of the emptiness of it; that he could see how poorly her nature compared with her appearance. She could feel a blush flooding her face. She bent down, and plucked some grass.

"You said you wanted to see me," she said. "I thought you had always known that I was married. I've always worn my ring."

She caught his eyes. She knew that he was aware that she was lying.

"My husband will be waiting for me. I think I'd better be——"

"Stop!" he said, quietly. "I have nothing to say, no reproaches to make. You have merely proved to me that my father knew what he was talking about. Before you go out of my life, will you kiss me once more?"

Immediately Mrs. Blundell became herself, and Ashley dwindled before her eyes.

"Oh, yes," she said, "but you must really be quick about it."

He opened his arms, and put them around her. He drew her slowly toward him, looking down into her eyes. Slowly he bent his head. She saw a gleam in his eyes, and, as she looked at them, her dream came back to her, and she felt his hands close round her throat. She tried to call out. She struggled wildly. He was killing her!

A coarse laugh rang through the quiet, scented air, and she found her-

self falling to the ground. She could breathe. The hands about her neck had relaxed.

XXX

WHEN Mrs. Blundell looked up, she saw her husband and John Ashley gazing at each other. There was none of the mutual hatred she expected and hoped to see—only a kind of sympathy.

"Well, are you going to kill her?" said Blundell; "or isn't it worth while?"

There was a pause, during which John Ashley's eyes traveled contemptuously over the figure of the woman on the ground; then he said:

"No, it isn't worth while!" The man who had hoped he knew more than his father, turned on his heel.

A sudden feeling of fright seized Mrs. Blundell. She struggled to her knees, clasped her hands together, and cried out, "Evelyn! Evelyn!"

Again the coarse laugh rang out.

"Evelyn, before God, I have been faithful to you! Before God, Evelyn!"

But her husband was not looking at her. He was watching Ashley as he made his way stumblingly out of sight.

The beautiful Betty Blundell crept through the grass, and clasped her arms around her husband's knees. She was weeping now, and could not speak.

Suddenly, Evelyn drew a bundle of letters from his pocket, and flung them in her face. The veins swelled out on his forehead, and his face crimsoned.

Then, with a sneer, he turned on his heel, and went down the hill.



AT THE SHORE

"YOU have broken my heart," he said, bitterly, as they walked back to the hotel. "Why didn't you tell me that you were married?"

"Why," she pouted, "how was I to know that you were single?"

GIPSY

By Frank Dempster Sherman

GREETINGS to you, graceful girl,
With your rose mouth and the pearl
Warders at that crimson gate,
Where Love's beggar kisses wait!
You are back in town again,
Come to make the hearts of men
Beat in triple time, and break
Into song for Beauty's sake.
From the mountain and the sea,
Have you learned what love may be?
Have you found, upon the links,
Cupid, silent as the Sphinx,
With his riddle of the Past,
And the answer guessed at last?
Sun and Wind, I see, have left
Freckle tell-tales of their theft,
And the tan upon your cheeks
Is a token of the weeks
Of your gipsyhood and joy,
Running wild as any boy.

Back in town, and now, alas!
Soon the gipsy spell will pass;
Soon the rose will revel in
Rounded cheeks and dimpled chin;
Soon will longer skirts conceal
All except the dainty heel;
Wilding ways will be forgot;
Why and *When* and *Where* and *What*
Soon will tame you, till your pace
Fits you for the urban race.
Day no more will bring delight;
You shall only live by night,
Moth-like, where the music falls,
Fluttering down fragrant halls,
Captivating every heart
With your artlessness and art.
Yours shall be a life that knows
Sherry's and Delmonico's,
Dances, dinners, mirth and Mumm's—
After which the headache comes!

So, before the season's here,
 While the echoes still are clear,
 Still are sweet of tree and turf,
 Still recall the shore and surf,
 Let me find you with the skies
 Of the Summer in your eyes;
 Brown of face and bare of arm,
 Wearing all your gipsy charm,
 Frank of word and free of wile,
 With the daybreak in your smile.
 Let me come to learn the lore
 Gathered from the sea and shore,
 Mermaid-magic, wood-nymph wit,
 Fascinating, exquisite!
 Be my gipsy girl, who can
 Read aright the heart of man;
 Read one heart that beats in time
 With your own, a couplet rhyme;
 And, if you will list above,
 You shall hear it murmur—*Love!*



POST-PRANDIAL REFLECTIONS OF A BACHELOR

IF you are not prepared to diet, don't try to live on love.

When you stand on the threshold of love, always get past the storm-doors before you give the belle a ring.

The course of true love never runs smooth, because the man and the woman are rarely, if ever, on the same level.

A man will try to marry the girl he loves—a girl will try to love the man she marries.

Many a young man travels a fast pace because he has hitched his wagon to a star.

The way to a man's heart *may* be through his stomach, but that does not justify some women in thinking they can retain possession with a monotonous ménage of roasts and hot water.

In the game of hearts, when in doubt lead diamonds.

Love is blind because no one is willing to be taught by him, but learns only through experience, and so he has no pupils.

A good man often burns the candle at both ends in order to throw more light on some subject.

The song of life is often a duet in A flat, with incidental minor accompaniments.

Even though a man thinks the world of a woman, he should remember there are other planets.

Who is better fitted to gather in a crop of wild oats than a rake?

When, as often happens, their first child brings love to an unhappy couple, they are conscious of the dawn of affection when they behold a son rise.

BERT TIMONEY.

A LITTLE WHITE DOG

By Herbert D. Ward

RICHARD EARL BROWN walked the streets moodily. For fully an hour, he had lost every idea of topography or direction. Brown was thinking. He was thinking severely and bitterly. He was marshaling his successes and offsetting them with his discomforts. Men rarely contrast successes with failures, generally with unhappiness. The Brown Earl, as his friends called him, was conscious of a distinct emptiness in his life. He was miserable and dissatisfied, although he was married. He kept saying to himself, "A man of genius has no business to marry." This was followed by a sentence that tinkled repeatedly through his brain: "A creative mind should not be hampered by a wife."

Now, it must be acknowledged that the Brown Earl knew in part what he was talking about. He *was* a genius, and he *had* a creative mind. Indeed, he was one of the leading animal-painters of the country. His cats were sphinxes; his dogs human; his sheep were romantic; his cows maternal; his horses winners, and his prices were astonishing. He was confident of his power, and unconscious of himself. He did not think of himself, but of his work, and he was ignorant of the fact that he could no more escape observation in a crowd than his pictures could fall flat in an exhibition. Tall, tawny and alert, with long, wavy hair, a full, flowing beard, and a piercing countenance, he was as marked by his bohemian disregard of style, as he was by his manly personality. This fact he persistently disregarded, in a childish and fatuous manner.

As the Brown Earl stalked along, loose-jointed and erect, fondly imagining that he had hidden himself in a side-street off his favorite haunts, he revolved the sources of his disappointment.

He was married to a woman who cared more for afternoon teas than for art. True, he did not expect her to be a model, for he painted only animals, but he did look for a deeper appreciation than was expressed in caviar sandwiches and Martini cocktails. Although he was consumed with ungratified paternal feelings, he could forgive Ethel the fact that he was childless as he was childlike, if only she would allow him dogs in the house. Yes, when he thought it all over, this was his gravest and greatest grievance—he led a dogless life. In other respects, Ethel was a fine woman. She had a superb figure, was an efficient housekeeper, made an effective figurehead, entertained gracefully—but she could not endure dogs. He might as well not be married at all.

What an unreasonable thing a woman is, especially when she is married, and has a man at her mercy! There was Sandy McKay. His house was a continual orgy of dogs.

Thus Richard Earl Brown chewed the cud of his grief, meditating in an amorphous manner some vague kind of a way out of his canine loneliness. Why, he had always dreamed, since he was a boy, of having a collie herd a sheep on the lawn in front of his house. It would be a decoration and homelike. Then, in the evening, the collie would sit patiently at his master's knee, with his eyes lovingly uplifted,

patiently waiting for a sign of affection. At night, his faithful friend would sleep at the foot of the bed, protecting his unconscious master from fire or burglars—a sort of a living Landseer. If the world but understood it, Brown's masterpieces were the unfilled longings of a soul that loves animals better than man, and sometimes woman, because it understands them better. Thus the painter brooded, as he had done for many months. Squaring the circle seemed to him an easier problem than squaring his life to the presence of one little dog in the family. Yet he felt that it must be done or he would die of want. If he had asked to keep a cow in the flat, or a sheep, or a horse—a single dog did not seem to him a preposterous proposition; indeed, it seemed to him——

The artist stopped short in his thoughts, as if he had been electrocuted; for there, sitting upon a dingy, brown-stone stoop at an open, dingy, brown door, he beheld the most beautiful creature he had ever seen. It was a little, fluffy, white pup, and it could not have weighed a drachm over two pounds. There it sat, saucily eying him with dancing brown eyes, roguishly hidden behind curly brows. The little thing's black nose sniffed the air critically, as if trying to decide whether the stranger were hostile or not, while his long, silky ears lay hesitatingly back upon his head. The dog looked like a little white elf, dropped down by some supernatural hand to tease us into the belief that dogs are more human than we suppose. Brown stood before the white vision, enraptured, almost afraid to move.

"Oh, you beauty!" he cried to himself, while his heart gave a great leap. Then he smiled encouragingly, as he would have upon a child, and timidly held out his hand. The animal-painter was oblivious to all the world except this exquisite creature. He noticed neither the name of the street nor the number of the house. Mistily, he recalled how he had come. All he saw was this tantalizing sprite that had already begun to coquette as

only puppies know how to do. It cocked its ears forward, having decided that the stranger could be trusted, until the silken tips curled ravishingly over its eyes; then it brought its front paws down with a patter upon the stone, and uttered a challenging bark, between a squeak and a gurgle. As Brown advanced cautiously up the steps to stroke the creature, it measured his advance with incredible precision, and, as the man stretched out his hand with deft insinuation, the pup sprang back with an inimitable sideways motion, and crouched again. This time the vision did not await the stranger's approach, but, with another squeak of ecstasy, it described a couple of airy circles, and then flew down the hallway in a broad-gaited, scampy scamper, and disappeared.

Brown waited ten minutes patiently for the beautiful creature to reappear. He heard a feminine voice calling "Bijou!" and the sullen slamming of a door. Then, noticing some faces behind closed blinds watching him intently, he came to himself, and slowly strolled away, thinking of nothing else but the little creature that had so suddenly illumined his life, and then left him in greater darkness than before.

The possession of that puppy now became Richard Earl Brown's one object in life. Every soul has a criminal corner. Into this, Brown crept and communed. He began to plan imaginary theft. With what bait could he allure the sprite? By what means could he kidnap it? In a shameless way, he reviewed plan after plan, each one of which might have landed him in a precinct cell. His highly organized creative fancy called up pictures of the dog so fascinating, so compelling, that he almost stretched out his hands to pet. Indeed, Brown was rapidly being intoxicated with the fumes of his own fantasy, when he was suddenly brought into a proper mental relation by a warm tap upon his shoulder.

"Hello, Earl!" cried a rough, generous voice, "come into the club, and have a drink. You look lost. What's the matter with you?"

With the reluctance of one who has been forcibly awakened from an exquisite dream, Brown recognized his old friend, Sandy McKay. McKay, nicknamed "Sandy" by his fellow-students on account of his hair and freckles, was another genius to whom one could never ascribe the conventional, and seldom the sane. He was a marvelous painter of the figure, and the commonplace was his eccentricity. Sometimes he disappeared for a week or a month at a time, and no one thought to raise a question. He was brutal in expression, loyal to ferocity, and would sacrifice a millionaire for a witticism, and always an acquaintance for a jest.

"I have seen a vision. Thank you, I will, Sandy."

"A vision, eh?" laughed Sandy, reprovingly, well knowing his friend's limitations. "What is it—bovine, canine, or equine? Whose menagerie have you been doing this time?"

"Look here, Sandy, you cold-hearted devil, you!"—Earl stretched out his legs, and eyed a large, unsalable masterpiece that an unknown artist had loaned indefinitely to the Painters' Club—"this is serious."

"Cold-hearted?" mused Sandy, ignoring the other part of the sentence in a dreamy way.

"Well, then—cold-headed, unappreciative, if that suits you better. What do you know about a woman's caprices, her whims and fancies, her impalpable tyrannies and intangible demands, that no jury could take cognizance of?"

"Good heavens, man! you don't contemplate—?" Sandy put his glasses down with a thump.

"Now, don't be foolish; you know," putting his elbow on the little table and dropping his voice, "how my wife hates dogs?"

"Well?"

"If you only knew how I detest that superior, bachelor-complacent, emancipated tone of yours!"

"Well?"

"I've seen a vision, and don't know what to do with it—that's all." Earl

leaned back, and fetched a sorrowful sigh.

"Canine?"

The animal-painter nodded.

"Why don't you buy it?"

"I'm afraid I can't."

"Why don't you steal it, then?"

"I have thought of that, but what should I do with it?"

"Why, carry it home, and—if you'll pardon me—force it down your wife's throat."

Earl looked at his friend indulgently, and relaxed into a gentle smile.

"What fools you bachelors are!" he said, simply.

"Oh, I don't know. I've had some experience with women. The trouble with us Americans is that we forge our fetters by giving in to the woman's eternal nonsense at the start. She loves her master no less than her lover."

"That's all right before, but marriage is different."

"My dear boy"—Sandy arose, his untamed face took on almost a tender expression—"do you suppose a woman's soul differs after her possession by the man she is supposed to love? Nonsense! She craves a master, and when she finds she has not drawn one in life's lottery, she takes to clubs and society, or—nagging. I must be off. Good-bye."

"How the devil do you know, Sandy?" Earl looked up, affectionately. "By the way," he continued, "where's that pretty model of yours? She disappeared about six months ago. You never did anything better than that Proserpina, San. It had modesty, you know, a something nobody would have given you credit for. Where is she? I wish I had seen her. Out of the business? Married and a janitress, I suppose. Wasn't her name Kitty?"

Sandy McKay turned his strong, brusque face, and looked out of the window steadily. "I—I've heard she's married. They all do. I say," he jerked out, "take my advice about the dog. Good-bye."

Earl went to the window, and watched his friend out of sight. His artist's

eye saw what puzzled him—a face from which recklessness seemed for the moment to have been ejected, and into which reverence had slipped. His mind stumbled over many rumors of his friend's frequent disappearances, and of his wild life. "I hope it isn't Kitty," he mused. "I heard talk. They say she was a good girl. No, it can't be." Then, like a dissolving view, Sandy and the mystery of his soft expression fled, making room for the beautiful, Maltese pup, and the problem introduced into the animal-painter's not always placid life.

II

BROWN endured a miserable week before he made up his mind what to do. In a fine sense of the term, Brown was an aggressive-looking man. When they opened wide, his eyes were blue, and as compelling as steel from Toledo; and his nose, because of its haughty arch, might have belonged to Cæsar. But in reality, the painter was as diffident and shy as the animals he immortalized. As if by hypnotic suggestion, he had found his way back to the dingy, wooden house on the side-street—one of those streets which might have been anything, good, bad or indifferent, for aught he knew.

The artist had the peculiarity of absorbing in his observation only that upon which his soul was concentrated. Thus he had the blind as well as the seeing eye. Absent-minded, eccentric, have always been by-words applied by commonplace minds to genius. Brown's whole nature was now engrossed upon seeing that beautiful dog again. He would as soon have walked up to the proudest palace on Fifth avenue and rung the bell, as to have pulled that of the dingy house on this street. As he did so, a policeman strolling by, gave him a long look, as if he were engraving him on his official tablets for a future emergency. Of this, Brown was profoundly ignorant. Nor did he notice faces watching the handsome man with the morbid curi-

osity peculiar to those whose lives have little mental variety. After the second ring, the door opened slightly. A neat maid eyed Brown from behind the crack.

"Isn't—" he stammered, shyly—"isn't there a—beautiful white puppy living here?"

The girl looked up at the great, blushing man, and then burst into a hearty laugh.

"Why, yes, I suppose there is."

"Is he yours?" eagerly.

"Oh, no, he belongs to my mistress, who wouldn't sell him for the world."

"But I don't want to buy him. I only want to see him. Can't I?" Brown pleaded.

"If you'll step into the parlor, I'll ask her." For Brown, with the astuteness of a lover, had slipped a dollar bill into a willing hand, and had shamelessly pushed his way in.

The room into which he was ushered showed evidence of a refined poverty which is a thousand times harder to bear than that brutal want which storms our sympathies and our pocket-books. Pictures, such as might have been the gleanings of a studio, were mounted in hand-made frames, and gave an artistic air that nothing else could impart. The rugs, worn to their vertebræ, still added a fictitious warmth; besides, the room was scrupulously neat. As Brown, in a dull way, his ears alert for a patter on the floor, was taking stock of his surroundings, the door opened, and a beautiful woman melted in. In her arms, she held the white sprite that looked at the rising stranger wild-eyed, and then hid its face, for fear, beneath its mistress's chin. This formed such an exquisite posture that Brown stood enraptured, without speaking. As if she were used to admiration, the lady stood like a model, until the puppy lifted its white face, and peeped out from under its silken lashes, and spoiled the first pose, only to make a second still more entrancing.

"Oh, you beauty!" cried Brown, advancing with outstretched hands.

"Sir!"

"I beg your pardon," stammered Brown. "It's the dog!"
"Sir!"

"I mean—he is so beautiful! You will pardon me, I know," as he noticed the anxious face, "but I passed here the other day, and saw your exquisite dog in the doorway, and tried to speak to him. You see—I—paint dogs, and I want to paint him, just as I saw him, now, in your arms. It isn't asking too much, is it? Won't you let me? My name is Brown, R. E. I don't suppose you have ever heard of me. But I think I could do the best thing of my life, if you would let me."

The lady put the dog down, and immediately Brown got down on his knees, and began to entice the creature to him. Prancing, dancing, barking, evading, advancing and retreating, pawing and leaping, the witch used all the arts that God has given woman to bewilder man. And the lady looked down upon the two with an inscrutable smile. At last, after ten minutes of coquetry, the man and the dog shook hands, and soon the puppy flitted into his arms, and looked up into his enraptured face, with large, brown, elfin eyes eager for love, and ready for alarm. Perhaps, in all his life, Brown had not been happier than over this conquest. Then he arose, and stood before the woman, fondling her little dog, the puppy no longer averse, but eyeing its mistress for permission to take this new friend into its little life.

"Yes," said the lady, quietly, and perhaps a little sadly, "I don't know but it is foolish, but I see you appreciate Bijou. I have heard of you. Can you come every Monday and Thursday afternoon? Say about two? You had better go, now. Come, Bijou, darling!"

But Bijou did not want to come, and clung with its sharp claws to Brown's coat. With a deep delight in his heart, the animal-painter took the puppy in his arms, kissed it full upon its cold, wet nose, and gave it into its owner's outstretched hands. In a moment, he found himself

outside the door, dazed but triumphant.

It never occurred to Brown that his victory had been a suspiciously easy matter. He had come, and in ten minutes he had conquered. He was so used to the complaisance of models that he took the lady's quiet acquiescence in his request as a matter of course. The Brown Earl now existed only for the two happy afternoons that illuminated each week. He prepared a large canvas for a life-size picture, and, at each sitting, the subject grew upon him, so that it finally took complete possession.

There she stood, the eternal feminine, tall, large-limbed, slender-waisted and full-throated. Her eyes, the color of the arrow-leaved violet, now gleamed with deep amusement, and now grew moist with mysterious sorrow. Her brow was broad and noble, her chin strong, her nose straight, and her lips a passion. Indeed, she seemed the very incarnation of love and modesty. Was she matron or maid? Brown noted the beauty, the perfection of her figure, the generosity of her attitude, with the cold, approving eye of an artist. He had no thought about *her*. She excited neither his imagination nor his curiosity. As an animal-painter, she appeared to him as only a matrix, a rare setting for the silken dog that rested upon her breast, and upon which his heart was fixed.

How the puppy and the man flirted together! Indeed, the woman seemed more like a chaperon to the two in that delightful interval of rest when art ceased, and revelry took its place. Brown taught Bijou to sit up and pirouette about on his hind legs, and play tag, and to jump up on the man's shoulder, and put paws on his head, to roll over, and what not. Like two little children, they played and pranced and chased each other and quarreled and kissed and made up.

It soon happened that the puppy watched for him at the window, and barked a wild, hilarious greeting, on

those two days of ecstasy for both, and Brown never failed to bring a chicken that squeaked, a ball that rolled, a doll that talked, to the pretty spaniel; but it so happened that he never thought of bringing anything at all for the woman.

It was natural that under these peculiar circumstances, when his heart was busy, that his art should be at a white heat, and Brown recognized that there was growing under his hand the masterpiece of his life.

At this time, when his studio seemed empty, and even his own home tame, two little things happened that nicked the edge of his surreptitious happiness. One unoccupied, rainy afternoon, as he was sitting listlessly at the club, thinking of Bijou and his irresistible antics, his friend Sandy McKay strolled in, looking ragged and a little the worse for liquor.

"Look here, old fellow," said Sandy McKay, sitting on the arm of his chair, and looking down with his old, daredevil, mocking smile, "don't you think you are going it pretty steep for a virtuous married man?"

"Why—why—what do you mean?" But Brown's heart gave a jump.

"Oh, you needn't try to bluff me with your little trips to a certain side-street. I just want to give you a pointer, though, that you needn't think you can make regular pilgrimages in the daytime without people getting on to it."

Brown did not answer. Sure of his high-mindedness, he was greatly troubled. For the first time, he realized that he had drifted into an inexplicable position. Sandy eyed his victim keenly, and then guffawed with his customary callousness. "Forget it," Brown's tormentor said, "and have a drink."

But Brown arose hastily, and went out. There was a problem, indeed! It needed only two or more sittings to finish his picture—and then—even then, how could he give up his intrigue with the dog, which had already become an integral part of his life? He walked home moodily, try-

ing to conjure daylight into the gloom of his predicament. For he, of all men, could not afford to have the doubtful connected with his name.

As he entered his spacious flat, he remembered that this was the afternoon of one of those interminable teas which his wife delighted to give. It was in the late Autumn, and hot tea dashed with rum warmed the skin, and loosened the tongue. A Babel of sound greeted him. He took off his overcoat, and stood for a moment behind the portières that separated the drawing-room from the hall, uncertain whether to enter or not. On the other side, he heard a couple of familiar feminine voices pitched to a low key, saying:

"Isn't it too bad? He has been seen going there all the Fall."

"They say that she is very beautiful."

"Strange that such a sensitive creature could—and his wife! Look at Mrs. Brown. Poor thing! What a scandal if it comes out!"

"But you mustn't breathe a word."

"How could you doubt me?"

"I feel better now. Let us go and have a cup of tea, as if nothing had happened."

"I am so glad he isn't here. I couldn't bear to speak to him. I am told that he is handsomer than ever."

Brown stepped back, aghast. He knew who his traducers were—gray catamounts ready to tear any man's reputation to tatters. What should he do? His face burned as if before an open fire. He felt as if the whole world were pointing at him. Good God! He must see his wife at any cost, and read in her dear eyes her trust in him. He took a long breath, and plunged into the hot, babbling room.

"Ah, Dicky, dear!" A superb woman came to him hurriedly, and put her hand on his shoulder with loving appropriation. "I was so afraid that you wouldn't come. You look tired. You mustn't work so hard. There! Miss Simmins will take you and give you a cup of tea, won't you, dear?"

The artist's wife turned to the old cat, and resigned her husband into the shriveled scandalmonger's charge.

III

EARL BROWN stepped back from the canvas, and surveyed his work with approbation. The portrait was completed. The picture was done. Another stroke might mar it. Nothing could add to the marvelous verisimilitude of the work.

Indeed, it was a portrait such as Landseer might have been proud to produce. It was the portrait of the little white dog, done with the detail of a Meissonier, the color of a Monet, and all the verve of a Gérôme. It was an elfish, irresistible, barking likeness. You almost expected it to jump from its mistress's arms at a gesture, to give you its paw at a word. It was thrilling with vitality, vibrant with the eager life of puppyhood. Its eyes followed you questioningly, with a mixture of challenge, coquetry and fear. It was—why try to describe the heart of that art? for it was beyond description. When you lifted your eyes from the dazzling centre of light to the face of the woman who merely held the dog, you were conscious of a Madonna repose that marked the contrast to that maddening bundle of watchsprings. And, in the foil of this serene, noble womanhood, lay, perhaps, the artist's greatest triumph.

"That will do," said Brown, gravely, to his model; "I have done all I can. Don't you want to look at it?"

With a quick motion, she put the puppy down, and came to the window.

"Ah," she cried after a long silence, "it is certainly wonderful."

But Brown was engrossed in playing with the dog, who was rushing madly about the room, trying to entice his friend to tag. In one of his grotesque leaps, the dog happened to look up at the picture. For the first time in all the sittings, Bijou focussed the canvas correctly. He saw, as in a looking-

glass, another dog than himself gazing down upon him. The puppy backed off, glaring at his rival, and then began to tear his throat in wild defiance. Thus was paid to Brown by the creature he loved the best the highest tribute, expressed in no subtle fashion.

Brown took up the outraged, foaming sprite, and tried to explain matters to him, but this only made it worse. What would he not give to possess for always such an appreciator of his own art? Engrossed in this pup-play, he dimly heard the front door open, and vaguely acknowledged the excuse of the mistress of the house, to retire for a moment. Unable to appease his maddened friend, Brown had turned the canvas to the wall, and now peace reigned. In the midst of the quiet, he heard loud tramping, and louder voices from above.

From an instinct of pseudo-guilt, Brown stood up and slipped on his fur overcoat, and waited, with the little dog clinging like cotton to his breast. Indeed, the great-coat could easily envelop the dog so that its presence could neither be seen nor detected. Above, the voices increased in violence, and the puppy shivered in terror.

"I tell you," a muffled voice penetrated the parlor, "I won't stand it any more! I shall kill the dog! Damn the pup, anyway!"

After a faint, feminine protest, the harsh voice took a lower strain.

"I tell you, the dog sha'n't live another hour. I'll kill him to-day! I'll wring his neck!" A fierce, feminine shriek followed. A door slammed, and heavy footsteps began to descend.

Brown stood horrified. On his breast, his pet had shrunken to its smallest size. Bijou was completely hidden in the fur. The artist hesitated for an instant, while his lips set fiercely. He cast a swift glance at the back of his great picture; then his hand felt for the puppy's little face. A moist kiss was the answer. That caress decided him. He took up his hat, buttoned up his coat over the frightened dog, and, even as the un-

steady steps above were on the top stair, he had opened the front door, shut it softly, and was gone.

It was not until he had left the side-street, and his feet were rapidly tapping the Avenue, that he realized that he was a thief, and that he had left behind him his masterpiece as witness of his degradation.

IV

APRIL and the Spring had come. It was varnishing night, and to-morrow the thirtieth annual exhibition of the Academy of American Painters was to be opened to the public. For the first time in some years, Brown was not a member of the hanging committee. There had been a little row with Sandy McKay, just enough to make Brown resign in disgust. A hint, an innuendo of favoritism, a dig in the artistic ribs—any one of these is enough to breed anti-exhibition feelings. Artists are about the touchiest lot in the world, next to sardines.

"Are you ready?" asked Brown, impatiently, of his wife. It was already after eight o'clock.

Mrs. Brown came into the room looking the picture of woe. In her arms curled Bijou, very limp and sleepy.

"How can I go, Dicky?" she inquired, reproachfully, "and leave the little angel all alone! Why, *anything* might happen. The house might catch fire. I shouldn't be happy a moment, would I, you——?"

The lady put her head down, and covered the white dog with a shower of kisses. Bijou looked up, caught a glance of amusement in his master's face, and then, feeling a little embarrassed, growled at his mistress's caress.

"Don't you think you overdo this dogolatry?" Brown paced the floor, and clicked his watch like a school-boy during a long prayer.

"The little darling! What could I do without him? Life would be so barren!" Mrs. Brown made a second

dab at the dog's muzzle, but was held up by another warning gurgle. "Oh, you ungrateful wretch!" She put the dog down, and it immediately came to its master, and begged to be taken. For the mutual admiration of the little white spaniel had brought the two together, long after the honeymoon had become but an unreal memory.

"I thought you didn't like dogs," Brown repeated for the hundredth time.

"This isn't a dog; it's an angel; it's an exception to every rule in the calendar. You know I can't live without him. Neither can you."

Bijou looked from one to the other, blinking as if to decide which he loved the better.

"He's a little fool." Brown stooped, and lifted this bond of union by the nape of the neck, and deposited the creature upon his shoulder. "He's a cross between a white owl and a cockatoo; I say, let's take him to the exhibition, and I'll smuggle him in under my overcoat. Want to go, you white devil, you?"

For answer, the dog gave an ecstatic series of yaps, and in a minute, the united family were on the street, walking in the brisk April wind.

As they neared the exhibition, Brown mused. What had become of his picture? From whom did he steal the dog? He had not heard a whisper. He had never gone back. Waves of guilt and remorse had swept over him from time to time; but these were more and more infrequent. He had never regretted the exchange. For, from the moment his wife had seen the little, exquisite creature, she had been its willing slave. From that hour, he no longer kept apartments; he had a home. Bijou was always there to greet him when he came to dinner, and the first thing to wake him in the morning was a kiss almost as delicate as a pink cloud. And he *did* love the little creature, and his wife loved it—and they all three loved one another—and——

They had come to the door of the

Academy building. The usual bohemian, artistic, and semi-fashionable crowd was streaming in.

"Let's not stay long," said Brown. He still felt a little piqued, and, besides, he had only a couple of small pictures hung somewhere, undoubtedly in the sky.

"That's so nice. I'm in a hurry to get back, and Bijou is tired." Mrs. Brown assented, with the readiness of a comfortable wife.

They drifted in, keeping on their outer garments. Brown carelessly took a catalogue, and bowed conservatively to a group of acquaintances.

At the end of the hall, in the place of honor, a great crowd surged.

"Hello!" said Brown to his wife, with a little twinge, "I'll bet that's one of Sandy's stunning nudes. He's been draping so much lately—this is a reversion of types, I suppose." Unexpectedly these words clamored at the ears of our painter:

"Hello, Brown! I congratulate you."

"It's simply great!"

"Absolutely stunning!"

Before he knew it, Brown felt himself being dragged along toward the high light, amid an ever-increasing and enthusiastic group. With difficulty, his wife clung to his arm, while beneath his coat he could feel Bijou shivering with fright.

As they advanced, the crowd, as if by a preconcerted plot, opened, and let the animal-painter through. Astonished, almost paralyzed with alternating currents of feeling, Brown looked up and gazed upon his masterpiece. If it had seemed good to him in that dingy atmosphere of a back-street, it now glowed superbly under the well-trained battery of lights. It was the triumph of the exhibition. All other pictures paled beside its coloring, and were limp beside its marvelous vitality. It was not only the sensation of the year, but, as it proved, of many years.

"Good God!" trembled Brown. "What does it mean?"

But his wife cast upon him a look

of pride mingled with suspicion. "You never told me about this," she whispered. "Who is your model? She is very beautiful," she continued, with tightening lips, "and Bijou is absolutely perfect. How is the precious?" She bent over, and plucked from out its hiding-place the little dog, and held the shrinking, shivering creature up to her face, patting it thoughtfully. Instantly a cry arose from the crowd. "Oh, the dear! The little darling! The original! See the original of the picture!" As the people passed around to glance from the dog to the picture, and the portrait to the dog, Brown, who was still speechless, felt a strong hand on his shoulder. He looked around, and encountered the dancing, mocking eyes of Sandy McKay. Then he knew that Sandy had engineered the conspiracy about the picture, and he paled as he wondered how much else Sandy knew.

"I want you to meet my wife," said Sandy, his face suddenly losing the mocking quality.

"Wife!" exclaimed Brown. "When were *you* married?"

"About eight months ago," said Sandy, gravely. "I married Kitty, my model."

"My dear fellow, I congratulate you with all my heart. Although I have never seen her, I understand she is very beautiful."

"Don't be too sure. Here she is!"

Brown looked up, and received his second blow in the solar plexus that evening. For before him stood his beautiful model, the woman from whom he had stolen the dog.

"God!" exclaimed Brown, cold sweat breaking from his brow. "What have I done? What shall I do?"

"Don't worry, old man," said Sandy, gently. "I guess we'll fix it all right, if you'll only let her come to the house, and see the dog sometimes. There are moments when she misses it terribly, but I do all I can to make up for the loss, you see. Kitty! Kitty!" He beckoned over the heads of the crowd, caught the eye of a stately woman, and

pushed ahead, dragging Brown with him.

"He wants to congratulate us." Sandy spoke with the boyish delight in a practical joke. "He was a little afraid to come. He feels so guilty."

The two clasped hands, warmly. Brown had nothing to say, and could only blush furiously.

"You don't need to look like that," Sandy went on. "I just want to explain that you were the victim of a little plot that didn't fail. I'll give the girl credit for the fact that she didn't approve of it at all. She is too darned honest, aren't you, Kitty, dear?"

The two drifted together naturally, while Brown still looked at them in amazement.

"I'll begin at the beginning," continued Sandy, tightening his grip on his wife's arm. "Kitty and I got married, and I didn't know how she would be received, so we didn't let on, and I took a house, where you found Bijou. We were awfully happy, and Bijou was company to her when I was away. Then you came, and we had to go to London, and couldn't take the dog, but I wanted you to have him. So when the picture was done, I gave the grand howl, and worked the bluff about killing, and Kitty shrieked, and I thought it quite dramatic. You got your dog, and had to take it home, and we kept the picture. Now, sir," with a glance at Kitty, "if you can show good and sufficient proof that you have treated the dog well, you can have the picture back with a deed of the dog in the bargain."

"Look here, Sandy," said Brown, leaping to the present, "were you nasty to me just to get that picture hung without my knowing anything about it?"

"Yeppi."

"Well, I must say you are a—confoundedly deep one, and I must advise you, Mrs. McKay, to look out for your husband, even when he is under your thumb, as I hope he'll always be."

"But, Mr. Brown," the lady put her hand gently on his arm, "do you forgive us?"

"On one condition."

"And that?"

"That you take the picture and keep it for your children, and I'll keep the dog; that is, Mrs. Brown will. She worships him."

"Dicky, dear!"

Brown turned at the sound of his wife's voice, but before he did so, he gave the two before him a glance which they understood.

"I have looked everywhere for you. Bijou is miserable, Mr. McKay," she explained, graciously, "when we two are separated. I don't suppose you want to go home in the midst of this triumph. Just think, he never told me a word about it, Mr. McKay. I am the most surprised and the proudest woman in the world!"

"Let me introduce my wife, his model; Mrs. Brown! You see, he couldn't. I swore him to secrecy, and the picture belongs to Mrs. McKay. It was an exchange for the dog."

"Is that the way you got the dog?"

"Yes, dear," said Brown, lamely.

"Well," said Mrs. Brown, after a critical glance at the great picture, and she was the only person in the world who could have said it, "I would rather have my darling Bijou than a hundred pictures like that."

"Oh, I must!" said Kitty. She bent over to stroke the white spaniel. But the sleepy dog laid back his ears, and growled at the intrusion.

"Why, Bijou, you wouldn't growl at me?" At the sound of that dear, familiar voice, the dog underwent a marvelous change. His ears shot up, his eyes opened piercingly, his hair stood all on end; he uttered alternate sniffs and half-stifled shrieks. Then he gave a leap into his old mistress's arms. He kissed and fondled and clawed and cried, and went through all the gamut of ecstatic expression, revealing a love that might have been dormant, but never fully replaced. For, if anything implies the possession of a soul, love does; and possibly love is the soul's only permanent attribute. Only an unimaginative materialist could have looked upon the little white dog at this

moment, and questioned whether the logic that annihilates these little lovers may not be as foolish as that which damns unbaptized infants.

The two men regarded the scene with curious eyes, but the women were tense with excitement. Mrs. Brown held her breath, not daring to speak. After the dog had exhausted every form of recognition, it turned toward its new mistress, and put out its paws to be taken back. It was as if it had welcomed its dearest friend to its home, and was satisfied.

"Do you want to come?" asked Mrs. Brown, tremulously. Bijou wagged his tail tremendously.

With a triumphant smile, Mrs.

Brown took the dog back to her arms; there he curled contentedly, and then he gave a prodigious yawn. With dancing eyes, Mrs. Brown held out her hand. She felt she could afford to—she was so happy.

"Come next Thursday afternoon," she said. "Bijou will be glad to see you; so shall I."

"Thank you. It will give me pleasure," replied the model, with dignity.

The two men looked at each other. They knew what that recognition meant to the newly-wedded woman. And they tacitly agreed by a mutual droop of their eyelids to allow a section of the past to be locked within the barriers of their lips.



LOVE'S SORROW

OF Fate I prayed nor Fortune nor yet Fame.

"Grant me but Love!" I cried, "I ask no more,
Life's board is Bounty's feast, with his rich store."

And ere my prayer was uttered, lo! one came

Whom I thought Love, for he did bear Love's name,

And one in speech of Love's divinest lore,

Nor once betrayed the cunning mask he wore,

Revealed at last in Trial's crucial flame!

Then bitterly to Fate did I complain:

"O cruel thou, my dear desire to cheat!"

And Love it was, not Fate who answered me:

"Thou art unscathed—a noble scorn shall free

Thy spirit from the snares of base deceit,

'Tis Love who weeps the treachery and the pain!"

ZITELLA COCKE.



ALAS!

MISS DE MUIR—Were you ever hypnotized, Mr. Hector?

HECTOR (*sadly*)—That is my excuse for being married.



LESTER (*despondently*)—I suppose some one has been telling her I am a fool.

ROLAND—Maybe not. Perhaps she guessed it.

A FADING ROSE

THIS was the rose that yesterday
 Made my nook of the garden gay;
 Bonnie and blithe and debonair,
 Kissed of the sun and Summer air;
 Sweet coquette in a ruffled dress,
 Glad of life and its loveliness.
 Would I had thought it greater sin
 Thus to pluck it and bring it in;
 Here the dusk of this sunless room,
 Blurred its beauty and killed its bloom,
 Till none would think this drooping thing
 Once was merriest child of Spring.
 Only a fading rose, and yet
 Wakes in my heart a strange regret,
 Such as might come if one should see
 Columbine in her tragedy,
 Or a laughter-loving, little Pierrette,
 A sob in her throat and her blue eyes wet.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



A DIFFERENT MATTER

EXCITED INDIVIDUAL—Help! help! I've just had my picture taken!
 BYSTANDER—Why, that's nothing to get angry about.
 EXCITED INDIVIDUAL—It isn't, eh? My picture was a Rembrandt! Help!



IN SOCIETY

“THEY are particularly fitted for each other.”
 “You think so?”
 “Yes. Neither cares for the other, and both have money.”



SHE—Don't you ever get tired of holding my hand?
 HE—Oh, say, no! I don't mind a little thing like that.

WHAT SOCIETY IS COMING TO

By Felicia Goddard

SCENE—A dining-room. In centre, a large, round table set for twenty-four; it is spread with flowers, silver dishes and candlesticks, and every appointment necessary to a formal dinner-party. A butler and six footmen stand about. Back, between opened curtains, is a smaller room, where the hostess is visible, in process of marshaling her guests. One of these, a gentleman, consults his card, and evidently asks to be introduced to the lady he is to take in. As he approaches her, they both start and betray some emotion, but, after a moment, she takes his arm, and they move into the dining-room.

HE (as they enter)

Well, Lydia, what is it to be? Are we to converse like any other pair of guests, or am I to address myself entirely to the lady on my other side?

SHE (sitting down)

It is to be simple sincerity. We talk, of course. For my part, I am delighted to have the opportunity. Look around the table. Is there a single person here who has time to remember? Certainly not; and, if he did, why, he would praise our good manners! The world we live in moves fast. Look at Maisie Lee, opposite. I once told her enough about you to make her understand how bitterly, and, let me say, how justly, I hated you. Well, she catches my eye. Is she recalling it? Dear, no! she is noticing my new tiara.

HE (not quite naturally)

I was noticing it, myself—a charming ornament!

SHE

Yes, it is a pretty thing—rather insignificant, of course, beside most women's. The diamonds are absurdly small, but the design is tasteful enough. My husband gave it to me.

HE (startled)

Your husband! Oh—ah—yes, of course. (After a slight pause.) He has excellent judgment.

SHE (with meaning)

You think so? I had fancied——

HE (interrupting hastily)

By the way, you must point him out to me. Which is he?

SHE

Guess.

HE (after deliberation)

The man next our hostess?

SHE

Louis! Of course not! You know how I have always hated fat men.

HE

Well, he looked prosperous. I picked him out because he seemed to be my exact opposite in purse and person.

SHE

My husband is the nervous little man next to Maisie. There—and eating lobster, I vow!—a thing he never allows me to have in the house; so indigestible, he says, though I am extremely fond of it. How like a man! Strange you should not have seen him before. Now, I know your wife well—by sight, I mean. I will tell you a secret. I was at your wedding.

HE (*surprised*)

You, Lydia!

SHE

At your second one, I mean.

HE

I understood. It happens that I recall your presence at my first. But why did you come again?

SHE

Interest—or curiosity. I came in a thick veil, and sat with the servants in the gallery. I felt very much inclined to make your wife a present, and it would have been the most valuable of any.

HE (*interested, in spite of himself*)

A present of what?

SHE (*pointedly*)

Of my experience.

HE (*crossly*)

Upon my word, Lydia—(*he stops, laughs, and changes his tone*)—I almost wish you had. Matrimony is a difficult state, and the more experience we all have, the better—especially your sex, for I don't think I am prejudiced; but I must say, Lydia, that men are a great deal easier to live in the same house with than women. We may have our faults. What? Oh, well, of course, we have, then; but they are large, positive faults, which, in time, any well-disposed person can learn to make allowances for, but at least we are not always on the wrong side of every little, petty question that comes up in twenty-four hours. We don't feel it a matter of life and death to know who let the lamp smoke. We don't want to place the blame for every—

SHE

Mercy, Louis! it takes me back ten years to hear you talk like this! As if we poor women liked fussing over details, especially when you men make it so peculiarly disagreeable with your bad tempers, to say nothing of the fact that you never let us forget that it is you who supply the wherewithal. Even two men, if one had to do all the

arranging, and the other forever nagged him about the bills, would not hit it off so——

HE

You are hardly just.

SHE (*continuing*)

It isn't so pleasant to keep house for any one, but for an exacting, irritable man—! You don't want us ever to think about the kitchen, but, if your dinner is not good, why, you fling on your hat, and leave the house.

HE (*angry*)

I own I do not see why no man is ever comfortable in his own house. Heaven knows, our wives spend enough of their time and our money over it

SHE

Oh, Louis, don't tell me you are still fussing about the coal bill!

HE (*very angry*)

There, that is what I resent! To hear you women talk, one would suppose that money grew in a man's pockets. You call a man a miser, who——

SHE

Oh, she calls you that, too, does she?

HE (*furious*)

Yes, she calls me all the things you used to call me, if that is any satisfaction to you.

SHE (*calmly*)

It is—the greatest. It proves, of course, that the difficulty was always in you. It is not credible that you could have run across two women with exactly the same qualities. No, it shows, just as I always said, that, owing to the inherent hatefulness of your disposition, *no* woman could live with you.

HE

I don't know what you mean. I could be the easiest man in the world to get on with, if a woman had a little tact—they are supposed to have so much. But my experience—well, with all my faults—and I own to a bad temper—I only ask to be let alone. No

man likes to be pestered when things go wrong. If no one spoke to me, they would never know. And, certainly, it is not meanness to want to live within your income. Why, thunder, Lydia! I have only just caught up since you—

SHE

Pray, spare me. I hear enough of such conversation, day in and day out—"culpable extravagance," "insensate luxury," "the necessity of putting away a quarter of your income against a rainy day." I know it by heart, thank you, but I don't come out to dinner to listen to it all over again.

HE

You mean to say your husband—? But I thought he was so disgustingly rich?

SHE (*confidentially*)

He is—simply rolling in wealth. But look at the shape of his ears! Couldn't you guess what his fault was?

HE

Why, but, Lydia, that is just the way you used to talk to me! You used to say that the shape of my ears— (*He feels them.*)

SHE

Well, you were rather—what shall we say?—economical, Louis; but, really, considering all things, not much worse than he. It does seem hard that I should have happened on two such men, doesn't it?

HE

But what was that that you were just saying?—you could not have found

two men with exactly the same qualities. If you have the very same fault to find with him, of course you see what *that* proves. And, seriously, Lydia, your extravagance—

SHE

That's enough, Louis, and, fortunately, there is Mrs. Westcott, getting up. Good-bye. I suppose I may never see you again to speak to.

HE (*giving her his arm*)

I'll take you to the drawing-room. Let me give you a piece of advice. Try to remember how hard some one worked to make your husband's fortune.

SHE

While we are on the subject, Louis, I ought to tell you that no self-respecting woman will stand the way you sometimes speak—the things you permit yourself to say.

(*They go out. As they do so, they are observed by another couple, who are moving across the room.*)

THE LADY

Now, why are those two connected in my mind? She was not his sister, was she?

THE GENTLEMAN

No; he had no sister.

THE LADY

Of course not; yet, I am sure it was a mistake on the part of our hostess to send them in together, though they seemed to talk pleasantly enough. I am positive they are related. (*She gives a gasp.*) My dear man, how hideous! She is his *divorced wife*!



AN IMPROVEMENT

MISS QUICKSTEP—I hear you are as good as married, Mr. Lansing.
LANSING (*cheerfully*)—Better. I am still single.



MANY who are sundered by God are united by clergymen.

AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE

WHEN Helen went abroad last year,
 Her many friends averred
 It was to read her title clear
 In Burke—a duke preferred!

For Helen is a beauty—tall,
 With gray eyes full of mirth—
 While Helen's bank-account is all
 A coronet is worth.

But now she's back again, despite
 The titles to be sold,
 Her wealth as *countless*, beauty quite
 As *peerless* as of old.

FLORENCE KIMBALL RUSSEL.



ONE CONSOLATION

PATIENT (*feebly*)—Doctor, do you think I shall survive the operation?
 PROUD PHYSICIAN—Well, sir, if you don't, you have the satisfaction of knowing that it cost nearly twice as much as any similar one performed in this city.



DESCRIPTIVE

DARKAWAY—Did you make love to any girls at the shore?
 CLEVERTON—Yes. One from Boston and one from New Orleans.
 “How was it?”
 “Did you ever have chills and fever?”



SHE HAD HIM THERE

HE (*past middle life*)—Life was a desert until I met you.
 SHE—Nonsense! Then how do you account for your luxuriant crop of wild oats?

THE TRESPASSER

By Julien Gordon

(Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger)

A GENTLEMAN jumped from a hansom-cab, and sauntered leisurely into the Waldorf. It was nearly one, and the luncheon-parties were arriving. The main dining-room, however, was but thinly filled.

When we say gentleman, we mean that at one glance this man took rank in that rare column into which so many force themselves, where so few belong. He impressed one at once as of that order of being—recommended by a wise counselor—haughty to superiors, indifferent to equals, affable to inferiors. If this was not enough there was more; the note of true culture, which is never boastful, never brusque, the manner which is not manner, but an effortless ease, and the clothes which do not fit too well, are not too new, and are yet of unobtrusive elegance.

He chose the first table that offered itself close to the door, somewhat in the shade, set for two. He took up the menu, and called the waiter to his prompt order—some grilled fish, a couple of chops, some fresh green vegetables, a bottle of claret. Some cheese? Well, yes, perhaps—if he had time.

As he sat waiting idly for his meal, waving away a paper the servant offered him, his eyes became riveted on the table next to his, at which lolled a girl. The inevitable vase of flowers rose between them, so that, to observe her conveniently, he was obliged to bob his head about. He became tired of this in a short time and impatiently pushed the carnations toward the wall.

The girl was absorbed in a magazine, and did not notice the intense gaze fixed upon her. Now and then she smiled, as if amused, leaned on the table and gave dabs to her hat and the abundant halo of her pompadour bloneness, with her tanned fingers.

Her observer was a man of about forty. He was tall and spare. His hair was thick and very curly, tufted about his forehead, darkly gray. His forehead was full of intelligence, straight and broad over two somber blue eyes, tranquil as Summer lakes. The eyebrows were arched and imaginative. The nose was delicate and strong. The mouth, hidden by a brown mustache, was serious, merry and animal. The complexion, of an olive pallor, was polished like old marble. Women admired this peculiar glint, and often told him it made his profile statuesque. The full face, with its low brow and rounded chin, was a trifle short for correct classic contour.

Strangely enough, the girl's complexion was exactly like his. It contrasted, however, more oddly with her hair, which was of a reddish gold. Her skin, fresher, younger, absolutely without line or blemish, was exquisitely beautiful.

He became so engrossed in his contemplation of the child—she was little more—barely fifteen—that when his luncheon arrived he hardly noticed it. His pallor, as he watched her, seemed to increase. Once or twice, he moved in his chair restlessly, as if about to leave it and go over and speak to her. While undecided, and

toying with his knife and fork, a lady, flushed and flurried, came to the door, looked about through her lorgnon and then, with an ejaculation, moved quickly to the table where her charge had been awaiting her. She sat down with her back to the man, who also uttered an ejaculation. "Mrs. Norman! Then it is she!"

The girl gave him a blank stare. His eyes played with hers a moment. She turned them away, and began to chatter to her new companion.

"I thought," said the latter, "the dressing-room maid would never get done mending my *balayouse*. I wanted to wring the neck of that oaf who tore it for a yard. You were clever, Pussy, to get this little nook; it is quiet and cool and out of the jam."

The "jam" was beginning to invade the window-seats, or to select those tables in the centre of the room where one could see and be seen.

Their neighbor had begun to consume his fish and his chops, but it was evident that it was no ordinary interest which kept his eyes perpetually wandering toward the lady and the young girl.

When they had all done with their repast, paid and risen to leave, he managed to be near the girl at a book-stand in the hall, where she lingered while her chaperon went to find a wrap. As she fluttered the leaves of a novel, he was close to her elbow and spoke to her.

"What is your name?" he said.

She looked up, and answered, saucily: "My name is Adrienne; my mother's name is Mildred and my father's Charles. Anything more you would like to know?"

"You are mistaken," he said, smiling, in a voice which was vibrant and sonorous; "your father's name is not Charles, it is Adrian."

Under the careless smile of the man of the world there lurked an uncontrollable excitement. To look upon her and have her think him an impertinent intruder, a male masher bound for adventure! Her *gamine* rejoinder had startled, shocked, yet

charmed. It was so like Mildred! Was she being brought up in the same school? At his words, the girl flushed a vivid scarlet and wheeled round as if to run from him. Then, suddenly, with a rapid revirement, she came back and whispered, almost inaudibly, but with a sweet, feminine curiosity, "How do you know?"

"I know your father," he said.

"Give me his address," said the girl.

They had their backs now to the stall. They were conscious that the woman behind the counter was listening to them.

He took out his card, and, scribbling a number upon it, handed it to her. She slipped it quickly into her glove. All this had taken but a few moments. Mrs. Norman—as he had called her—was seen peering down the hall from the door of the Turkish *salon*. The girl cried out, "I am coming, auntie."

"What was that man saying to you?"

Mrs. Norman was near-sighted, and had not seen the stranger's face.

"I asked him the exact time," said Adrienne, nonchalantly, "and he said it was two o'clock. We shall be late for the ferry if you want to catch the two-forty. Let's get an auto and go on. I want to stop and get mama some lily-pods."

II

As Adrian McDonald walked up Fifth avenue to his chambers opposite his club, his soul was distressed within him. He had looked upon the face of his only daughter, and she had passed him by without recognition! But, no! That blush, that question, that eagerness, that asked address, what did they mean, unless that the girl was cognizant of facts? Did she want to know more—to be told—to hear, to see that parent whose name, so boldly uttered, had awakened their mutual agitation? Would she understand? Would she believe? Would that prepossessing exterior—modest as a man may be, knowledge comes to

him from oft-reiterated compliment—stand him in good stead now? Would she rely on him? And, when she had read his full name on the card, would she remember? That his wife's second husband had adopted her and given her his name was a source to him of grievous shame. Such undeserved shame, too, born of Mildred's vengeance and his own high sense of honor! He had shrunk—nobly, his friends said—weakly, his enemies—from stirring up the mud again, tarnishing his wife, wrecking a happiness which he heard was entire. The nine years had gone, and the infant he found no courage to tear from her mother was now almost a woman—a woman, with feelings, opinions, desires, dreams. What were they? An overmastering tenderness, a tenderness which had played an unconscious part in his sudden decision to return, inundated his tired spirit. The years of his loneliness, of his wanderings, of his empty grasping at husks, seemed robbed of their pain by that one swift cry, "How do you know?"

"Oh, my little child, my little child," he murmured to himself, "did you not feel that it was I?"

For if Mildred had found happiness, he had not. Such loves as were bestowed on him left but dust upon his hands. He had, in fact, not tampered over-much with women. Cupid's first brew had been too awkwardly mixed. He was one of those men who disquiet but do not soothe, who excite but do not calm. He remained an enigma to the women who loved him best and whom his wayward spirit at once fascinated and repelled. When they mistook his enthusiasm for their beauty or their wit, for love, and later fathomed their mistake, they sometimes hated him. He was one of those natural orators who, under certain conditions, express more than they can feel. The reactions of this temperament are not readily pardoned—rarely by men, never by women. On the whole, he admired women, but he feared them. He detested complication.

At twenty-five, Adrian McDonald

was the most talked-of young advocate in New York. This is saying much, where competition is so cruel. He was found to have the gift of eloquence. He could state a fact sanely, handle it gracefully, hurl it at a juror's ears like a cork shot from a champagne bottle. He could clothe it with frolic or with pathos. He had sarcasm—which he never wasted—and a regnant reserve which guarded its secrets. His debonair manner, which amused, could suddenly develop thunderous earnestness, and make men tremble and women cry. These gifts, added to his distinguished personality, conquered for him the girl of whom he was enamoured. A selfish mother, who wished him to remain near her, brought to his choice an unwilling, hardly-wrung consent. She was ambitious for her male swan, and although Mildred Fairbanks was beautiful and clever, she was portionless, and her people were quite "new." Being "new" without being gilded is surely a form of unpardonable presumption. The girl's beauty and brightness, however, carried the day.

They were at first largely dependent upon Mrs. McDonald *mère*, who was rich, while they were extravagant. From the outset, there existed between the two women that form of antagonism which grows at last into a nervous repugnance. There sprang up between them a species of rivalry. Both were brilliant, both desired an audience. This explains the attraction of simple minds for intricate ones. Mrs. McDonald insisted upon taking the young people to her own house, which was large enough for several families. Here the trio had, rumor reported, a stormy eight years of it. Too much under his mother's influence, extremely occupied, all the young husband's gallantry and the young wife's desire to please, could not control an incompatibility, secretly fanned by the machinations of the older woman.

It was when Adrienne was six years old that Mildred left her husband. She was a woman of passionate imagination and of cold temperament,

not an unusual anomaly. She adored her child far more than she did her husband. Could she have had children through the aid of science she would gladly have dispensed with husbands. Nevertheless, after her divorce, which was obtained on a trumped-up charge of laughable insignificance, she remarried. It was then that Mrs. McDonald made her will.

III

YOUNG Mrs. McDonald married *en seconde noce* the lawyer who procured her separation. Much older than herself and deeply in love with her, he was her obedient and humble servant. A man of wide knowledge, high standing, unblemished record—an authority, a power in the world of politics and of society. She was considered peculiarly fortunate. He was also wealthy. The triumph of the somewhat-frowned-on divorcée was complete. People had thought her violent and unfair. Her success brought pardon.

Undoubtedly Adrian had been stupid. There was just one moment, after their last fierce quarrel, when his future and hers lay in his hand. Who knows if even the chilliness with which he reproached her might not have been engulfed in one of those reconciliations in which rancors and dignities succumb! One of man's mistakes is not to strike a woman's soul when at white heat. He dallies at the price of rapture. The delight of the "making up," as of a first enthrallment, never returns, and, if checked, holds always the alloy of mortified resentment. His pride overstepped the mark. He lost his chance. When he did offer a separate establishment, every concession, it was too late. To-morrow's payments tread closely on to-day's mistakes. His seemed so harsh that for a moment he thought of suicide. For he loved his wife, after his own fashion, and the breaking up of his home was to him a confounding humiliation, a cataclysm of which he had, man-like, never dreamed. Her

accusations of neglect he had never taken seriously. Flattered by the triumphs of his precocious eminence, he gave too much time to his career and not enough to the study of his young wife's disposition. Her woman's vanity rebelled. It is astonishing at what pains men are not to give a woman pleasure! When he got ready to beg her pardon, happiness was over. Martyrs probably did not care very convincingly for the world. They were glad to die. Suicide presupposes an extremely strong will and great moral courage, with a sudden failure of the energy to live. With Adrian, a natural love of life speedily returned. He tried to laugh at his discomfiture, to live it down, to remain in the same town with his ex-wife—and failed. He could not. He threw up the law, and took a diplomatic appointment. He filled it importantly enough to be heard about. A first-rate mind can be supple and be forced, with audacity and determination, into almost any channel. He was too impatient, however, and imperious for the tortuosities and subterfuges of diplomacy. He felt his best powers wasted. Yet he remained at his posts almost nine years. He served in several.

One morning, an unexpected attack of homesickness seized him. Underneath lay an ineffable longing to look once more upon the face of his lost child. He had never forgotten her. The very sorrow of their separation seemed to give her in his thoughts a peculiar place. He hid away her image in a corner of his heart into which no other intruder ever penetrated. He suddenly felt as if he had been asleep and must throw off his languors, and return to the vigorous activities of his progressive country.

Life had taught him something, suffering much, and here to-day, while he was cogitating how to manage an interview with his child, fate had thrown her across his path! And he had barely been at home a week! His recognition of her became positive certainty at the arrival of her mother's

sister. This lady at least was not changed as was the child of six. Yet he had felt no doubt—the likeness to himself was so pronounced, to her mother still more startling.

When he reached his apartment he threw himself upon a lounge, lighted a cigar, and gave himself up to his thought. How should he get at her, see her once more, and yet once more? How could he live forever banished from this dear presence which seemed to thrill chords now long dormant, crushed under the artificial experiences of court etiquette and drawing-room persiflage? “And isn’t she lovely?” he kept saying to himself; “and she is mine, my bone, my flesh, my daughter!” Something elevating and refining, something which lifted him from the baseness, greed and envy, the low lusts and mean make-shifts of the world, seemed to emanate from her pure being. And he vaguely felt that in the citadel of her girl’s heart there lurked a traitor ready to do him service, to open the gates, to give him honor. If this were not so, why had the *farouche* virginity, which resented his approach, not gone farther and refused to parley with him? Why were his name and number at this moment in her palm? Had she been taught to hate him? He had been told so, and it had been one of his hardest expiations. He did not hold himself innocent. The quixotic generosity of his conduct toward his ex-wife announced this fact. If under it there lurked a spark of personal vanity, we must be lenient. Who of us dares examine with a magnifying-glass into the intricacies of motive?

“When I act on impulse I succeed,” he thought; “when on reflection, I fail. That is because my impulse is my own, and reflection is other people’s. My own guidance is best, and forced me to her.” Yet he felt an unacknowledged anxiety as to his action.

He had plenty of money, and he found himself longing to give it to her, to pamper and pet and cover her with luxuries, this child who ate at

another man’s table and slept in another man’s house. How he squirmed at the mere thought of it! Mildred herself had not resented more than he did his mother’s will. Keen and clear, cunning and concise, he found its breaking—which he had tried, although it jeopardized his own share of her fortune—impossible. She had woven her web like an angry spider, without his knowledge, in her malice and her spite. His own will—long since signed and sealed—at least made restitution. Of all he could dispose Adrienne was solitary legatee.

“My precious little dear,” he thought now, puffing at his cigar, “how enchanting it would be to hear your pretty feet upon my stairs, your blithe voice call me father when I came in! How happy I should be to help you in your studies, to form and teach you, to make of the hoyden that you are—for you are this, my darling—I have seen it—a woman of refined and exquisite repose!”

And then, somehow, his head fell forward on his breast.

IV

MRS. NORMAN and Adrienne scrambled into the two-forty train in all the heat of a Long Island afternoon. They found Mr. Falk already ensconced in the end seat of the drawing-room car. He was returning home earlier than usual to attend a village meeting about the opening of a new road. This road, which was to pass near his estate, was of importance to him.

His stalwart figure was reflected in the mirror at his elbow. He smiled at the women as they came up behind him. At fifty-seven, Charles Falk had hardly a gray hair, and his face was free from wrinkles. His iron nerves, his excellent digestion, his unruffled self-control, and the regularity of a life without blemish and without excess, kept him strangely free from signs of age. He was respected, admired, envied—hardly loved. Weak-

ness, not strength, gains hearts. He was thought unsympathetic and icy. He was, in fact, extremely affectionate. The absence of sensuality is often mistaken for a lack of heart. Falk was a man who lived in the mind, yet whose affections, if few, were devoted and lasting. He adored his wife with the timid homage of the late married bachelor who has lived long without feminine environment.

Mildred could never speak without emotion of his kindness to her daughter. Immediately after the death of her mother-in-law, and the reading of the will—in which this lady's legacy of hate sought to smirch her son's ex-wife by the clause that no progeny of his, born of a first marriage, should get a ducat of her fortune—she asked Mr. Falk to adopt Adrienne. After a brief hesitancy, he did so. He was rich, and the child was brought up as his own, in lavish luxury.

Mildred told an intimate friend that under any other circumstances she would have deemed their decision in bad taste, but that the repudiation of her little girl by her husband's family made it an act of self-defense. Perhaps this explanation was a sop to some misgiving. Adrian McDonald, through a lawyer, at once communicated with her. He desired to break the will, and make his daughter co-heir. Receiving only insolence for his trouble, he, on several occasions, sent the girl money. It was indignantly, vindictively returned. Then he "threw up the sponge," and lived to himself. He had never taken steps to free himself legally, and whether he could marry again or not remained an ever pregnant topic in feminine conclave.

Adrienne generally searched her stepfather's pockets for the picture papers and bonbons he always brought her on the nights he spent at his villa. She did so to-day, as usual. She got tired, after a while, of munching cream chocolates and of turning over the pages of the illustrated weeklies, and began to yawn—audibly. Mr. Falk, by whom she had seated herself, noticing her sleepiness, drew her head

down kindly to his shoulder. To his surprise the girl stiffened and sat very upright, repulsing his invitation.

"I am not sleepy," she said, coldly.

Mr. Falk was an extremely observant man. His career had made him so. He turned, and looked at the girl scrutinizingly.

"Bless me," he thought, "what a fool I have been! Adrienne is a woman, and I continue to treat her like a baby. I must change my manners."

It is a fact that near objects are sometimes indistinct. There had, indeed, seemed to come over Adrienne, even within the forty-eight hours since he had seen her, a peculiar transformation. Her eyes, half-shut, in a sort of drowsy dream, seemed haunted by a strange vision. He felt that he could not follow her reflections or her whims. He realized a change in her. Change is danger. These women he had taken to care for were the vital spring of his dry and arid industry, the only romance of his purely practical existence. As he sat by the side of Adrienne's unexpected rigidity, he asked himself what mystery had arisen to mar the perfect simplicity of their intimate relations.

Large minds surprise us by taking small symptoms seriously. It is the little mind that belittles. We sometimes think big people take insignificant things too earnestly. Now, however, he resolutely pushed away the idea of complexities, and applied himself to the perusal of his *Evening Post*. Had he been able to peer into the recess of the tan kid glove which Adrienne kept on her left hand, while she pulled off the right one, what sentiments would have been his!

Attached to Mrs. Falk while she was his client, he was sensitive to an odd degree at the faintest intimation that it was for his own benefit he had helped her to her liberty. In fact, he had said and looked no word of this attachment until some months, at least, after her divorce. If there was room in his calm spirit for any passion, it was in a vague jealousy of her past, to which,

while her adviser, he had come so near. He knew that McDonald was a man of dominating and compelling charm, and that Mildred must once have felt it. The remembrance never failed to stir in the depths of his really noble nature a sense of self-doubt and of pain. He did not consider himself calculated to awaken passion.

They found Mrs. Falk under the awning of the Umbra, and tea and lemonade were brought out to them. The house, discreetly Colonial, stood on a fine slope overlooking the Sound, shaded by great oak trees. Nothing more peaceful could be fancied than its adjacent groves and severe terraces. These were laid out with Italian regularity, and were sweet with the fragrance of well-cared-for flower-beds.

While Adrienne sipped her lemonade she chatted of her visit to town. Mrs. Norman took off her hat, and fanned herself. Mr. Falk, after a hasty gulp of whiskey and water, sprang into his waiting dog-cart to attend his meeting.

"Whom did you see?" said Mrs. Falk. "I suppose there isn't a cat in town."

"We did not see anybody," said Adrienne, "and we did not do much. We had a nice luncheon at the Waldorf. I love it. And here are your lily-pods." She dumped a parcel on the straw table which was strewn with books and periodicals.

"Good little Pussy to remember," said her mother.

Adrienne, after devouring several cakes and finishing her lemonade, said she must go and clean up for the rowing party on the creek. Mrs. Norman dawdled to the terrace, and Mrs. Falk was left once more alone.

She was still very handsome, although the poetic beauty of her youth was over. Perfect happiness is said to be a beautifier. Perhaps its ephemeral, more febrile manifestations do brighten eyes and lips and give that transient glow which we pause to admire and envy, now and then, on a passing face. The stagnation of its

solid basis is often a trifle coarsening. Content leads to a thoughtless indolence which dulls the wits and thickens the physique. Mildred, in her perfect peace—for perfect it was—had grown stout! Negative joys are probably the most enduring, and, in looking back upon the whirlwind of her first married experience, she hugged with infinite gratitude her present repose. No fears, no rancors, above all, no jealousies, seemed to her storm-tossed soul a very haven of rest. For she had been wildly jealous, as it was her nature to be. Cause? There had been little or none. But McDonald belonged to the type of the tormented and tormenting, to the problematic and the insecure. Mildred was hot-tempered. His unfailing amiability before her onslaughts maddened her. Undisciplined, she wearied his patience, and at last even his admiration. He withdrew from the scenes he dreaded, wondering at them in nervous moodiness, and she found herself—alone.

Mildred's character was not a petty one, but there are few natures which have not their dusky caverns in which preying vultures, unworthy of the light, build obscure nests. If there lurked anything unjustifiable in one of these remote recesses it was the unquenchable rancor against her first husband and his family. His very generosity was a vexation to her, and, instead of disarming, roused her anger. She suffered, if not from the standpoint of the woman scorned, at least from that of the woman wounded. Strongly attracted to McDonald in her first shy impulses of sex, she remembered with shame that she had come too readily to his will. In fact, her enemies said that she and her mother had "caught him." We are inclined to believe the average male has powers of self-preservation which make these lassoing processes apocryphal. Drawn by his undeniable talent, captivated by his gift of language, by his fascination of temperament, what was dramatic in her clothed him with every attribute she most admired. Vivid,

alive and peculiar, he etched himself at once in her floating fancy as something definite, unique and picturesque. She was caught from the safe moorings of girlish meditation, and hurled into tragedy. If the tragedy had been of their own foolish making, the catastrophe was none the less deplorable— young children toying over a precipice engulfed in its abysmal shadows.

She looked upon these early years as upon purgatory. Their few hours of ecstasy—she had tasted it, for a word, a tone, a kiss—were entirely eclipsed by months of dolor. It is a fact that most women are made happy by very little. That this little is lacking is the keynote of man's obtuseness. How the word spoken or kept back consoles or poisons the day! How the assurance given or withheld can give breath to or stifle hope! How a careless jest may jar a sensitive ear, or an ironical phrase rack a delicate sensibility! If it be true that the state rests upon the family, that the union of the sexes is of such vast importance in the economy of nations, would it not be wise to introduce in the curriculum of modern colleges a course for teaching those warring animals, men and women, to understand each other better! Must two inebriated and blinded lovers become so soon sober and wide-eyed enemies? The present upheaval gives one cause for thought.

In her deep yet quiet fondness for her new lord, based on respect and warmed by gratitude, Mildred found a sentiment from which was eliminated the element of torment. She was wise enough to weigh its values and to guard them.

V

ADRIENNE danced up the stairs to her bedroom, shutting and locking the door upon the toes of her old nurse, who was ready to pounce upon her in the upper hall. She fairly rushed to the window, and tore the thumb off her glove in her haste.

The card fell to the floor. She

picked it up. Here was his name— Mr. Adrian McDonald, with his diplomatic rank and a foreign address. He had scribbled his New York one underneath. Her pulses beat with phenomenal activity, and her little head seemed to keep measure, in its throbbing, with the excitement of her whole being. She remembered her father. Much came back to her now, and particularly his voice. She kept repeating to herself, "It is he, it is he!" Something hidden within her seemed to start into existence, and she was conscious of a sense of personal wrong mixed with a poignant pity for herself and for him. They two seemed to stand together in a lonely companionship from which—almost with disdain—she longed to dismiss all others.

She sat down, pressing the card between her fingers, thinking—thinking. She was a clever little minx and a thoughtful one. Her mother had been of late somewhat startled by a certain disingenuousness, a something secretive in the girl, which surprised and puzzled her. Adrienne, however, was such a spoiled pet, her caprices were so instantly granted, she was so rarely contradicted or thwarted that attrition and rebellion were infrequent.

Like all women whose rights of maternal tenure may challenge difficulty, Mildred's desire was to attach Adrienne absolutely to herself. Of her father she had spoken to her only twice. This was on occasions when the careless gossip of outsiders, friends or servants, had led to childish questionings. She did not fail to impress upon her daughter that they had been grossly ill-used, cast off and deserted. As it was Mildred who had left McDonald, these statements were untrue. She quelled fleeting remorse by assuring herself that Adrienne was so well off and Falk so admirable, that to permit any disturbance to jeopardize their present tranquillity would be a crime.

Adrienne, herself, remained *insouciant*. The perfectly well-groomed, well-fed, well-housed, well-ventilated young animal is apt to be so. Now

the psychic shock had shattered her unreasoned satisfaction. Like Undine's, her soul—whose wings were beating in its prison—awoke to protest and revolt!

As she pressed the card in her hand, and finally, almost furtively, to her lips, "He is beautiful, he is beautiful," she said, aloud, "and he is my own, own, own father."

She remembered how he had watched her, how she had wondered at it, and now his attitude loomed before her as pathetic and full of majesty. She finally locked the card in her tiny desk and, loosening out her long hair, went to her door and called her nurse, Elizabeth. The latter came with loitering steps, cross at her late uncere- monious treatment. Adrienne, how- ever, soon wheedled her into propi- tious humor. She wanted her.

"Nurse," she said, pettingly, "is your sister better?"

"Ah, no," sighed easily-entrapped Elizabeth; "she's still ailing, the poor dear, and I'm going to ask your ma to let me go to town to see her."

This was what Miss Adrienne expected. It is odd what aid, now and then, the fates, usually malevolent, seem to lend us. She prattled on about insignificant things while the woman helped her don her short can- vas frock and sailor hat, completely placated.

Mrs. Falk was still in the Umbra when she heard Adrienne's step in the adjacent library, and saw her fussing among the papers of the writing- table.

"What are you looking for, Pussy?" she called out.

The Umbra was a Summer drawing- room, half-open to the lawn and en- closed with glass on the side to the sea.

Adrienne drew out a telegraph blank, and wrote in a clear hand upon it, "Don't be out to-morrow at twelve." She addressed this message and signed it. To her mother—over her shoulder—she replied, "I am looking for a blunt pen; mine are all rusty. They get so damp with the fogs."

"Well, don't disturb my unan- swered notes, darling; I have quite a batch to look over before I dress."

Adrienne slipped the telegram in the bosom of her shirt-waist. She ran and kissed her mother's cheek. Her little pony-cart came rumbling up to take her to the creek. Its wheels sank to their hubs in the heavy beach sand. As she drove through the wind-whipped pines, their acrid odors wooed her to deep breaths of pleasure. On the dock, she met some other girls and their brothers. A German gov- erness had been corraled as chaperon.

Before Miss Falk jumped from the slippery, seaweed-coated steps into her row-boat, however, she was seen to draw aside Tommy Glazer, who was fishing from the platform. She gave him the telegram and a half-dollar which was wrapped in its folds.

"Pull across to the village, Tom," she whispered to him, "and send this at once from the station. It will cost twenty-five cents. You can keep the rest." As Tom's dirty fingers closed upon this un hoped-for tip, his eyes glowed with delight. He was a trust- worthy little boy, and in less than five minutes he was pulling his craft down the shifty rapids of the current into the wider channels of the open bay.

Before she slept that night Adrienne took one more peep at her precious card. She also surreptitiously bor- rowed an alarm-clock under some evasive plea—her perfidies seemed to have grown limitless—from a kitchen maid. At dawn it woke her from her dreamless sleep. Springing from her bed and assuming a most woeful countenance, holding her cambric hand- kerchief to her smooth cheek, she ran across the hall and rapped at her mother's door. Instantly admitted, in a few minutes she was swinging, with rosy bare toes to the floor, upon the side of her mother's bed.

"Oh, oh, oh!" she cried, "I've got the most awful toothache. Oh, oh, oh! I must go to town and see Dr. Grace. He said he was all through with me, but I've got it badly again."

"It seems inconceivable," said her

mother, sitting up among her pillows, anxiously, "that with your pearly little teeth you should have such an attack."

"Oh, dear me!" moaned Adrienne, rocking herself.

"Who will take you down?" asked her mother.

"Nurse is leaving at eight, and Henry could come with us on the cab while she goes to her sister's."

"Well, I can't take you," said Mrs. Falk, "for your aunt and I are promised for a luncheon at the Van Ordens'. With Elizabeth and Henry you can go perfectly well. He is so respectable."

She wished to examine the recalcitrant tooth, but Adrienne defiantly declined to have her mouth invaded. Notwithstanding her terrible sufferings she insisted, though the day was cold, in putting on a thin pink frock which was voted becoming. Utterly indifferent to the awkward ardors of her boy admirers, equally unmoved by the flatteries which her exceptional loveliness gained from older persons—whatever latent coquetry was hers seemed rife within her to attract the gentleman who had so entirely ruled her thought since their brief meeting in the restaurant.

Once at the dentist's she hurried off her nurse, who was to take herself in a car to a distant avenue. She sat a few moments in Dr. Grace's waiting-room while Henry, the groom, stayed on the curb. When Elizabeth was once out of sight Adrienne sent word to Dr. Grace that she could not wait, and with a nod at his office door, returned to the cab, ordering that she be driven around the Park. Henry stared in amazement, but obeyed. When this was over she gave the address of Mr. McDonald's chambers. It was ten minutes of twelve by her tiny watch. At one-thirty she was to meet Elizabeth at Sherry's for luncheon.

VI

THE manicure and coiffeur have trimmed the nails and hair of modern

genius, and "good form" has replaced aberrant behavior. McDonald's impulses were those of genius, without its old-fashioned eccentricities. When he received his daughter's telegram, the traditional bomb-shell may be said to have exploded at his feet. The vagary which had induced him to give Adrienne his address was already repented of. If he intended to take steps to arrange some *modus vivendi* by which he should be permitted to see her, he shrank from anything clandestine as beneath manly dignity. To be absent when she came to him, however, required a degree of strength of which he found himself incapable. He was, therefore, at twelve o'clock, pacing his sitting-room impatiently, in a condition of mind very far from cheerful. He cursed the folly which impelled him to reveal himself to her, and wondered what uncomfortable sequel might not result. However we insist, we are but puppets of destiny, and therefore can but bow to its irrevocable decrees with the best grace we can muster. Why, then, does self-condemnation illogically remain a part of our human make-up?

At the time of his separation from his young wife, McDonald held himself far from blameless. It was his pride to feel that he had put no spoke in the wheel of her late prosperity. If she had found it he would not rob her! Now that the years had scattered the cobwebs which at the moment obstructed his clear perception, he recognized his own mistakes as well as his mother's unpardonable culpability.

When the boy who ran the lift appeared at the door announcing, "A young lady, sir—she didn't give her name," and McDonald ordered she should be admitted, his perturbation became almost unbearable. He found himself disconcerted, shaken, as if with palsy.

He managed to master himself sufficiently, however, to receive Adrienne with a measure of superficial composure, and it was ceremoniously that

he bade her take an arm-chair near the window. The weather had changed, and the atmosphere, charged with electricity, was heavy and oppressive. His fierce effort at self-control made his manner cold. With an embarrassed laugh the girl's slim pink figure sank and was almost lost between the chair's wide arms. In a voice which was a trifle shrill, she cried, "I am so thin and this chair is so fat!"

This broke the ice. McDonald's trembling ceased. He sat down on a sofa near her, asking if she would take off her hat. The girl did so, tossing it from her to the table. The glow of her golden-red hair seemed to lighten the ugly, hired room. For two or three minutes they spoke of banal subjects; the sudden heat, her trip to town, his voyage and the march of progress in his own city. But portentous things were in their hearts. A few moments later he had drawn her to a stool at his feet, holding her hands in his.

"Are you my father?" she asked him.

He bowed in assent, remaining silent.

"Ah, I knew it. I have not forgotten."

"My little girl, my little girl," he leaned toward her, trying to master the twitching of his lips, "why did you come to me?"

"Perhaps you wanted me?"

The question was uttered with an almost shrinking gentleness. The lonely man's heart broke. His gray head fell forward upon her golden one, and his tears splashed upon her pure, high forehead.

She turned her face up to his, wonderingly, and, winding one of her thin arms about his neck, drew him yet closer, saying, with infinite softness, "Have you missed me?"

He shook himself free from her detaining hands, determined to conquer his emotion.

"Ah," he said, "don't ask me that!"

Then a great temptation seized him—the temptation to charm her. He longed to win her, to make her his again, his own, own baby child, the

child of his early love. He pulled her up to the sofa beside himself, and they began to talk earnestly.

"Is it true," said the girl, "is it true that you left us?"

This, then, was what she had been taught to believe! Let us say to his credit that he was not base. He understood, and pardoned.

"Adrienne," he answered her, "let bygones be bygones. If I did not do that, I did much worse. I drove your mother from my side, perhaps. You see, dear, we were very young and silly, and we did not know what we were about."

Adrienne shook her head with a woman's terrible searching. "Mama told me you deserted us. Then it is not true?"

"Probably," he answered, evasively, "she thought so. But why rake up the past? It is over for us both, with its errors and its chastisements. I have always loved you, my darling, always, always."

She nestled to him, confidently. The pity which, to Adrienne's misfortune, lay inherent in her nature, that defiant pity which is an element of all deep characters, which she had first felt for McDonald at the book-stall, clutched her child's soul.

"I love you," she said, simply; "you are my own father; I think you are beautiful."

And he did charm her during that poignant hour they passed together—charmed her with all the versatility of his capricious and fitful fancy.

"My name is Adrienne McDonald," she said to him, when at last she rose to leave him. "I hate the other. I will never be called by that again."

"Your mother's husband is kind to you?" murmured McDonald, huskily.

Adrienne hesitated. What if such an avowal caused a revulsion in this new-found father, and he returned to that courteously distant manner with which he first received her, and which for an instant froze her into regret for her rash escapade? Her hesitation was brief. Adrienne was at heart honest. A certain

compunction led her to reply, as a form of compromise with conscience, "He is a good man."

McDonald was very human. "One thing, my daughter, I wish you to know. It was never my fault that you are pecuniarily dependent upon him. It has been bitter to me. Your mother has no private fortune. In my will, at least, I provide for you."

In this announcement Adrienne seemed but languidly interested. "When shall I see you again?" she said. This desire appeared paramount and occupying.

"You shall hear from me, and soon," replied McDonald; "but this sort of meeting is quite out of the question. I shall have everything above board and quite open. I cannot encourage you," he said, smiling at her, "to continue such Machiavelian schemes. You must never deceive your mother again. This is not a request; it is a command."

He had listened, half-alarmed, half-amused, to the account of her strategies. Their betrayal of a talent at intrigue frightened, while their innocent confession made him smile. It seemed to prove that treachery was not common to a nature which, outwardly, at least, appeared hoydenish and frank.

"She is terrifically clever," he thought. This could not be gained, for surely no adroit old diplomat or weather-beaten general could have brought a difficult problem of statesmanship or war to more conspicuous victory!

As he watched her, from behind his curtain, roll away in her cab, what reflections overcame him! With what rapture he welcomed this affection which from some inexorable law of nature's mystic workings, had thrown them, against time, friends and favor, into each other's arms again!

VII

If Adrienne had been perverse, she was, at any rate, no coward. She

proved it on that evening in a manner which, if eminently disturbing to others, was satisfactory to herself.

To her mother's questions she deftly replied that her toothache having miraculously disappeared upon her arrival at Dr. Grace's, he could discover no trouble of importance, and she had driven in the Park while waiting to meet her nurse at Sherry's.

On this particular night there was a small children's party at Soundverge, which was the name of the Falks' domain. Mr. Falk had "stayed up," as Americans have it when designating those hours of leisure snatched from care and passed at their country homes. In spite of his reputation for ungeniality, he was a prince of hosts. He was scolding his wife, as the men-servants lighted the candles in the great round drawing-room, for her neglect, on a previous occasion, of a young married woman whom she professed to dislike. He was begging at her hands that this lady might be treated with greater warmth.

"I do so detest any form of snob-bishness," he was saying. Mrs. Falk was dressed in soft mull, with pale roses at her bosom, and looked very fair and lovely. "In the country it is absolutely detestable." It was a child's party, but some of the parents were included. Invitations to Soundverge were never refused. To the show-place of the vicinage it was an honor to be bidden.

Mrs. Falk, who was always *enfant gâtée*, answered, with a haughty toss, "Oh, that creature! You don't expect us women to bother about her? I invite her only for the gentlemen. I told Mrs. Van Orden so when she asked to bring her. She's too common for words."

The diabolic aplomb of this point of view made Falk laugh. His wife's wit was still a refreshment to him.

"Thanks for the men," he said.

"They adore common women," said Mildred.

"Do I?"

"Oh, I dare say—or, at any rate, you will. It is only a matter of time.

Men are less fastidious after than before forty."

"Perhaps they are more accustomed to rebuff."

She went up and laid her hand lovingly on his breast. "An angel like you? Dearest, what a pathetic speech!"

He raised her hand gently, and kissed it.

"So *you* don't rebuff me . . ." he said.

Adrienne, who was curled up on a distant settee, watched this scene with greedy inquisitiveness. There was a smile of contempt on her upper lip. She looked very smart in her crisp muslin. But there was about her a mysterious air, and two red spots burned upon her cheeks.

"Well, little one," cried Mr. Falk to her, "all ready for the reel? Whom do you intend to lead off with?"

"I am going to begin with games," said Adrienne, "on account of little May Van Orden's lameness. She can't dance, and we'll play with her for a while."

It was at the games that the girl displayed her illusion-shattering cruelty. They called one the Chinese puzzle game, and its initiative was a series of probing questions such as our exclusive brothers use upon helpless Europeans and Americans.

"What is your name?" was naturally the first. The older people had drawn around the circle of younger ones, and were interested in their merry rejoinders.

When Adrienne's turn came—"What is your name?"

"Adrienne McDonald," she said.

There was a quivering silence. It was soon broken by exclamatory young voices.

"Why, your name is Falk!" cried the little lame girl. "Have you got married and changed your name, Adrienne?"

Laughter bubbled over, and the shiver which had passed over the company was quickly dissembled in tactful conversation. One lady at least was touched to ecstasy. She who

was "asked for the men" and persistently snubbed by her hostess, had for once her innings.

But even the later dance seemed to have lost some of its gaiety. Two persons had received a thrust which they knew they could not ignore.

Adrienne danced away with a sort of elf-like grace. Her mother kissed her good night, as usual, albeit coldly. She felt that she needed to harbor force.

It was on the next morning that she sent for her. She was hurt and extremely angry.

With her husband she exchanged no word. He delicately refrained from any allusion to the subject which possessed them both, preferring she should be the first to speak.

"What did you mean by your conduct of last evening?" asked Mrs. Falk, with ill-disguised indignation, as Adrienne stood at last before her.

Adrienne's prevarications fell. They had certainly led her into troubled waters.

"Before you question me," she said, "I should like to question you, mama."

"You are impertinent; but ask what you have to ask, and let it be quickly," said her mother.

"Why did you give me your . . . your husband's name?"

"Whom do you mean by my husband?" asked Mrs. Falk, glacially. "Do you mean your father?"

"He is not my father. I have only one father. His name is Adrian McDonald."

Certain now that some outsider had tampered with her daughter, it was with a sense of impotent weakness that Mildred said, faintly:

"Who has been talking to you?"

"I have seen my father."

"You have seen Mr. McDonald!" almost shrieked her mother. "How dare you stand there and tell me this?"

Then Adrienne told all—the unexpected meeting at the Waldorf, her plan and its success, her interview and her decision.

"I intend to bear his name."

The melodramatic words sent her

mother into a peal of laughter, in which mockery and fury mingled.

That she should not resent what had taken place was surely asking of her too much. To her undisciplined mental habit, the blow was almost insupportable.

"You poor little miserable creature," she cried, "who, in your ignorant wilfulness, seek to pit yourself against the opinions and decisions of wise and prudent and competent judges! What has this man's family done but repudiate and disown you? I haven't a penny, you haven't a penny, and my husband, your father—yes, your father, since he took you out of the gutter and adopted you—oh, yes, the gutter—in which your precious grandmother wanted to drown us both—took you, cared for you, supported you, nourished, clothed, educated you, and you, like a little serpent, turn to-day to sting us both! I am horrified at you. Go out of my sight!"

She was so choked with tears she could say no more. The old grudge, the old jealousy, had awakened in her.

As Adrienne turned to go, her mother followed her. Her hand dropped heavily on the child's arm.

"You may strike me, if you like," said Adrienne; "I will run away to my father. It is not true he deserted me. It is a lie—a lie—a lie! If I am a beggar, you did it. He has tried to send me money. It was you, and no one else, who made a beggar of me. He is alone, he is lonely, he wants me, you and fa—Mr. Falk—have each other. He has nobody. I love him, I love him. It was outrageous to take his name from me, to give me another name. I hate it—I hate it. I am Adrienne McDonald—McDonald—McDonald. I love, love, love him!"

At the frenzy of this incoherent tirade, Mrs. Falk's own violence crumbled. Dismay and consternation took its place. She feared her girl would come to harm—to madness. She released her hold, and said to her, more quietly: "Go to your room now, Ad-

rienne; we will talk of these things later."

With stooping shoulders and racked by dry sobs, Adrienne rushed from her mother's presence.

VIII

AN hour later, very pale but entirely composed, Mrs. Falk knocked at her husband's study door.

He started as she came in, and they mutually and tacitly felt that this interview between them was to be one of the landmarks of their life. He led her to the sofa, and, seating himself beside her, prepared to listen.

In a low, monotonous voice, she poured out to him the details of her dreadful morning. As she talked, she seemed to remember his demur and her insistence when she had asked him, seven years before, to adopt McDonald's daughter. Yes, he had demurred. His sagacity, no doubt, anticipated pitfalls, and he yielded to her pleading only because she was so dearly idolized. Into these pitfalls Mildred felt the entire fabric of her peace had tottered. What a fool she had been in the golden paradise, in which her loved ones had walked hand in hand to fill her with the complaisant comfort of her great blindness!

Had she indeed wronged Adrienne—the child for whom she willingly would have given life? Had she indeed been not only unadvised, but cruel? Had she put her in a false position before the world, lowering her in her own eyes, and was there indeed an atonement due not only to the girl, but to that other one, who, with such enigmatic, inscrutable dexterity, had in one short hour undone the work of years?

"He was always wonderful," she thought, bitterly, "complicated and able, adroit and bold; apt at putting others in the wrong, himself in the right. He always stupefied me. It was to be expected his child should make me suffer." And she found herself for an instant as if again under

that spell of admiration which had held her youth, and which McDonald never failed to cast over those he desired to captivate. Mildred was too intelligent to continue to cavil and rail at the problems which now confronted her. She rather felt inclined to view her disaster—as coroners' juries do certain wholesale and indiscriminate calamities—as "the work of God."

Whether of God or of the devil, she was so powerless!

When Falk knew all he caught her to him with an immense compassion. "My dearest," he said, "I know what this means to you, and I bleed for and with you."

"After all she owes to you—!" she faltered.

He made a movement with his hand. "Oh," he said, "don't! I can't bear it."

"What are we to do?" she said, hopelessly. "She is capable of an *esclandre*. Think of all she has already done! It is frightful, such turpitude, so irremediable!"

Mr. Falk smiled. "Adrienne is not lost," he said. "Don't let us help to make her false. We will decide in a day or two what can be done—when I have had time for consideration—what can be managed. Of course, she is a minor still, and can be controlled; but you—I—could never force—" A hoarseness stopped his utterance.

"You are a god," she said to him.

They sat sorrowfully silent for some moments. Neither spoke more. They felt as if they had traveled miles and miles over desert earth together, but they knew that out of their lives forever had departed an element of its dignity and joy.



A SEASONABLE THOUGHT

NOW once again green-apple time
 Around to us has come,
 And when they're in the small boy's midst
 They truly make things hum.

But Mother Eve has shown us plain
 'Tis worse by far, I ween,
 To eat an apple that is ripe
 When you yourself are green.

McLANDBURGH WILSON.



IN CHICAGO

MRS. LAKESIDE—My physician recommends a change.
 MRS. DEARBORN—Climate or husband?



WHEN a man tells you that he is going to stand by you to the last dollar, it might not be amiss to ask him whether it is his dollar—or yours.

AT THE GATES

TURN back the years, pass by the roar
 Of city life on crowded street,
 And let me dream I see the shore
 Where two I know were wont to meet.
 Was love, I wonder, quite so sweet
 As painted now by memory?
 Was joy so keen, was time so fleet?
 Turn back the years that I may see.

Can Sleep, perchance, those days restore,
 The Gate of Horn those songs repeat?
 What was it in that youth of yore
 Changed Pleasure from the arrant cheat
 Whom now with ever wearied feet
 We follow vainly? Can it be
 'Tis we have changed? Sleep, I entreat,
 Turn back the years that I may see.

May see, in truth! For blind, and more,
 I live my life in city seat.
 Bring back but once the golden lore
 We learned amid the fields of wheat,
 And on the hills where white herds bleat,
 And underneath the island tree
 Where waves of silver break and beat—
 Turn back the years that I may see.

L'ENVOI

Sleep, 'mid the Winter rain and sleet
 I raise this single prayer to thee:
 Make place for me in thy retreat,
 Turn back the years that I may see!

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.



HIS COMPLAINT

“HER name is Pearl, and I thought when I married her that I was accumulating a pearl of great price,” said the pale-eyed, stoopy-shouldered man, the while a wan grin wrinkled his meager complexion. “But the mother of Pearl soon gave me to understand that her daughter was the pearl that was cast before swine, and that I was the swine.”

TEN YEARS AFTER

(WITH APOLOGIES TO DUMAS, *père*)

By the Baroness von Hutten

HE
SHE

THEIR THOUGHTS

HE—Well, how do you do?

SHE—Delighted to see you again!
(*The usual conversation, questions, etc.*)

HE—And you are to be here long?

SHE—Oh, no; my husband couldn't come with me, so I, of course, shall stay only a few days. And you?

HE—I am here on business, haven't seen the place for quite seven years. I was never so surprised in my life as when Billy told me you were here.

SHE—Nor I, when he told me you were down-stairs.

HE—Now, do tell me about your home, your life, and so on. Any children?

SHE—Two boys. Teddy is six—such a big boy!

HE—By Jove! Look like you?

SHE—N-no. He has blue eyes, but darker than mine. Are you married, by the way?

HE—No, I never married.

SHE—It seems a pity.

(*Silence.*)

HE THINKS—Jove, she must weigh twenty-five pounds more than she used to!

SHE THINKS—How gray he is!

HE THINKS—How long ago is it, anyway? Ten years, as I live! She looks much the same in spite of the fat. I wonder whether she remembers——?

SHE THINKS—It must be quite nine years! And it seems yesterday. (*Sighs inwardly.*)

HE THINKS—I wonder whether she remembers the last time we sat in the garden?

HE THINKS—Her husband! Good Lord, think of her having a husband!

SHE THINKS— . . . Seven years! I wonder what he was doing here, two years after I left?

HE THINKS—Same old way of slurring her "r's"!

SHE THINKS—I wonder whether he's married? Doesn't look it, somehow.

HE THINKS—She doesn't look thirty, but she must be.

SHE THINKS—Poor fellow, I wonder——?

HE THINKS—Now she's wondering why I never married. A good chance for a little sentiment.

HE—Did you think I would marry?

SHE—I—I didn't know.

HE—You knew I wouldn't.

SHE (*sadly*)—I hoped you would, Mr. Lennox.

HE—It was kind of you to give me even a thought. I suppose that you never realized what a lasting hurt you gave me that Summer.

SHE (*laughing*)—No, I certainly never realized anything so interesting.

HE—Oh, of course, it was all fun for you. Even I, besotted idiot that I was, knew that much.

SHE—Don't! We were both mistaken, but I'd hate to have you think that I did not at least believe myself to be in earnest.

HE—Did you—ever?

SHE—Yes.

HE—That evening—here, where we are now sitting, for instance?

SHE—Yes, of course I was. Do you think I'd have promised to marry you if I hadn't been?

HE—And then—we quarreled.

SHE—Yes.

HE—I have often thought it was a pity. I was very much in love with you, Nell.

SHE—Oh, you mustn't call me Nell! And—let's talk of something else.

HE—Very well. I obey you, as I always did.

SHE—As you always did! As you never did. You used to be the most obstinate man in the world.

HE—Affliction has chastened me.

HE—What were you thinking of then?

SHE—Nothing.

HE—But you were. Your eyes were dreamy—vague—just as they used to become—

SHE—Mr. Lennox, if I have really hurt you, please forgive me.

HE THINKS—I hope she never heard, by any chance, about Kitty Copeland.

SHE THINKS—Same old fall in his voice. What a fraud he is!

HE THINKS—I'll never marry a born flirt, that's sure.

SHE THINKS—I wonder if he did really care?

HE THINKS—"Lasting hurt" is good.

SHE THINKS—The plot thickens.

HE THINKS—I know that laugh, young woman. You're getting nervous.

SHE THINKS—Poor fellow! Well, I was unhappy about him for a time. Can one help it if one thinks one's self in love, and then finds one isn't?

HE THINKS—Is she lying? No, by Jove, she was in earnest that evening.

SHE THINKS—Oh, dear, he's going to be tragic.

HE THINKS—By Jove, so she did say she'd marry me.

HE THINKS—What the deuce did we quarrel about?

HE THINKS—I was in love with you, but, thank God, we didn't marry!

SHE THINKS—What would Harry say?

HE THINKS—Perhaps that was why we quarreled.

SHE THINKS—I wish Harry had his hair. Poor old Harry! I wonder if that "carboline" stuff Josephine told me about—?

SHE THINKS—Dreaming of my husband's bald spot!

SHE THINKS—I suppose even Harry couldn't object to that innocent sentiment.

HE—Oh, of course, I forgave long ago—

SHE—I have often thought of you, and hoped you were happy.

HE—Ah, happy! Who is really happy? If we hadn't quarreled—such a trivial little thing it was, to turn the currents of two lives!

SHE—Yes, a very little thing. I believe in Kismet, though.

HE—Yes, I know you do. And my jealousy was, you think, merely the instrument of the gods to pave the way for Mr. Roberts?

SHE—I suppose so. Jealousy is a horrible characteristic. Thank heaven—

(Pause.)

SHE (*briskly*)—But we are wasting time! Do tell me about yourself. How is Boston? And what do you do to amuse yourself?

HE—Oh, I've been hunting with the Norfolks, golfing, and so on. But I'm very busy, and have little time.

SHE—We are very fond of golf. California is the golfer's paradise, you know.

HE—So I understand. Well, I must be off, or I'll miss my train. I am so glad to have seen you again, Mrs. Roberts, and to find you looking just the same—

SHE—Oh, la, la! But it was charming to have this talk with you. I am sorry Mr. Roberts is not here; I'd like to have you meet him.

HE—Thanks. I shall hope to have the pleasure some day. Good-bye!

SHE—Good-bye!

(*He goes.*)

SHE THINKS—So you forgave, but did not forget?

SHE THINKS—He looks as happy as a clam—why are clams supposed to be happier than other creatures? What on earth was the row about?

SHE THINKS—Or do I mean "Mizpah"?

HE THINKS—Wasn't it about some man that we fought? I believe it was.

SHE THINKS—So he was jealous? Of whom, I wonder? It couldn't have been of that Englishman—George Something-or-other—

HE THINKS—Oh, Lord, I believe she was jealous of Molly Carter! She means that her husband isn't jealous.

SHE THINKS—Billy told me he had gone in for wasting—

HE THINKS—So I'm never to know what the famous squabble was about!

SHE THINKS—I wish I could have got out of him what it was we fought about.

HE THINKS—It would be dramatic to tell her of my engagement, but it's more artistic to let it go.

SHE THINKS—"Ships that pass in the night"—

HE THINKS—Hang Mr. Roberts!

SHE THINKS— }
HE THINKS— } ?



PURELY ACCIDENTAL

SHE—How did he come to marry his wife?

HE—It was purely accidental. Her wealthy uncle fell into the river and was drowned.

AFTER WORDSWORTH

“A PERFECT woman, nobly planned,”
 The poet wrote, I wis.
 I know not if he had in mind
 A woman such as this:

Her tresses are of sheeny floss—
 A flood beyond compare.
 (Encouraged ever faithfully
 By “*lotion capillaire*”!)
 Her brow is smooth as ivory;
 Nay, smoother does it seem.
 (Of most especial worth she finds
 A certain patent “cream”!)

Her cheeks are rich with blushing bloom;
 No Jacqueminot has such.
 (A little dab of “liquid rouge,”
 And powder, just a touch!)
 Her teeth like flawless pearls appear,
 Between her red lips twain.
 (They owe their hue to dentifrice—
 Save three of porcelain!)

Her neck and shoulders, round and firm,
 Are white as driven snow.
 (Massage it is, to fill them out;
 And bleach, that makes them so!)
 Her form is cast within a mold
 Where graces all combine.
 ('Tis Madame Catharine, modiste,
 Has fashioned every line!)

Her voice is liquid, sweet and low—
 As rivulets must talk.
 (She took a daily “culture course”
 With Herr Professor Squawk!)
 Her tapered fingers (manicured)—
 Her foot (in high-heeled shoe)—
 And oh, I'm much afraid her heart
 Is artificial, too!

Howe'er you take the poet's words,
 It cannot be gainsaid—
 I've shown you “how divine a thing
 A woman may be made!”

EDWIN L. SABIN.

JUDGMENT FOR DEFENDANT

By Miriam Michelson

MRS. HARVEY SUTFIELD-SIMPSON suddenly released her tense grasp on the arms of her chair. Its cr-creak was the first sound heard in the court room during the moment's stillness that followed the delivery of the judge's decision—that moment in which three people were mentally readjusting their future in conformity with it.

Then speedily came the bustle of adjournment, and the decision so young in moments, became old and stale and anticipated, as is the poppy-picked quality of news.

Mrs. Sutfield-Simpson held out a faultlessly gloved hand to the judge and a Swiss embroidered handkerchief to her eyes. She said nothing; nevertheless, her gratitude was eloquently expressed.

To her lawyer, she gave both hands and a smile—no tears.

And then she smiled over his head in the direction where Sutfield-Simpson still stood; smiled right into the eyes of the man who, a moment ago, was her husband, with a smile whose significance only he and she could fully appreciate.

She did not look at all at Hilary Belmore, who, by the court's decision, had been delivered from that ugly, hyphenated cognomen by which he had been designated since the great case began.

Belmore looked at her, though—curiously, quizzically, as though he did not understand her, and yet, all at once, fully understood her—his mobile musician's face mirroring his emotions till he became conscious of Simpson's eyes fixed upon him. Then

he caught up his hat, and hurried from the court room.

While her lawyer stepped over to the other table to arrange details with Simpson's attorneys—his confidence in her discretion was one of the greatest compliments his client, though a belle from girlhood, had ever received—Mrs. Sutfield-Simpson sank back in her chair, and faced the reporters.

Mrs. Simpson was delicately *gourmet*. She was tastefully horsey, tactfully bibulous, and she gave each man in whose company she smoked her perfumed, monogrammed cigarette, to understand that he alone was gentleman enough not to misunderstand such an action on a lady's part.

The charm that distinguished her socially, every newspaper man present felt now as he waited for her to speak.

"I do wish I could get you gentlemen to excuse me," she said, with the gracious condescension of the *grande dame* for the socially unclassified, but, also, with something of that comradeship the daily intimacy of a trial develops. "Oh, yes—I know I promised I would talk to you as soon as the decision was announced, but—no? Ah, well, then!

"In the first place, I want to thank you all for the way you've treated me. You've been most kind, and under the trying circumstances—" She put her handkerchief to her lips.

"Oh, Mrs. Simpson, how could we be otherwise?"

Mrs. Simpson looked at the youngest reporter, whose ardent soul had burst into speech, with a moist eye that thanked and appreciated him.

"I need not say to you how happy this decision makes me. No, it was not unexpected. I knew that justice would be done. I felt sure that innocence would triumph, and that the foulest wrong man can do woman—the aspersion of her good name—would meet a merited rebuke.

"Mr. Sutfield-Simpson—? Ah, you must not ask me to speak of him. That any man should bring such charges against me—but that that man should be my husband! Don't misunderstand me. I have no hard feelings nor harsh words for Mr. Simpson. Appearances may have misled him—for that one can readily forgive him; but that after twelve years of married life he should know the woman he had honored with his name so little—but I must not speak of that.

"I try—I shall try in the years to come to lose all rancor—to forget it all. Mr. Simpson is an author; when I married him he was a struggling author. To-day, he is foremost among society's favorite novelists. The personal suffering he has inflicted upon me does not blind me to his professional standing. I think him as clever to-day—despite what the critics say—as I did twelve years ago when I overcame my family's natural opposition to my marriage with a man utterly without prospects, whom my dear father supported as he, a millionaire at that time, would have supported his own son, during all those trying years when as a young author he sought to find himself and his place in the literary world. . . . But I did not mean to tell you that. The public, of course, has no concern with the ingratitude of talented men, and——"

"Would you rather we'd leave that part out, Mrs. Simpson?"

The lady looked at the very young-looking reporter with inscrutable, fine eyes.

"If you will be so good," she said, turning from him to the experienced journalist at his side.

The latter promptly put a question.

She hesitated, dropped her eyes, letting them dwell upon the heavy silk fringe that trimmed her smart frock,

which she flecked musingly with her gloved fingers.

"Mr. Belmore is an artist," she said, at length, "a musician with a poet's soul. That very sympathy which it is my nature to feel for the gifted, which first attracted me to Mr. Sutfield-Simpson, that friendship so pure that it stains it even to seek to classify it for the world—that friendship existed between Mr. Belmore and myself—nothing more. It still exists, I hope"—she lifted her eyes, and looked about the nearly deserted court room as though she had just become conscious of Hilary Belmore's withdrawal—"despite this terrible affair and the awful injury it has done him." She sighed, deeply.

"It is one of the unaccountable things in life to me that Mr. Sutfield-Simpson should have so misunderstood the nature of our companionship—Mr. Belmore's and mine. One would fancy that a man of letters would be first to appreciate at its true worth that congeniality of temperament which ensured mental *camaraderie*. I adore genius—don't let the printer get it *the* genius, will you? It is my nature. There is an ardent something in me that flames up into enthusiasm at the very thought of greatness—greatness in others. I have none of it myself—I am great only in my capacity to appreciate that mental miracle—talent—in others. It fills me with a passion of indignation when the world goes stolidly by, ignoring the presence in its midst of that rare, rare thing—a great man. Then I, in my humble, stumbling way, reach out a hand to genius in obscurity—just as I did to Mr. Sutfield-Simpson himself. It is no merit in me—I simply cannot help it. The greatest Genius who endowed a Belmore with the capacity to wring our hearts with those musician's fingers of his gave to me the petty complement—an appreciative soul.

"What more natural than that a woman whose place in society is what mine and my family's has been for generations should seek to introduce—not Belmore to my world that it might pa-

tronize him—but it to him, that he might put it under obligations by revealing to it the poetry of life! Yet, at the very first musicale I gave for that purpose at my place, Mr. Sutfield-Simpson—but I must not go into that; it has all been vulgarly misrepresented here on the stand. You heard Mr. Simpson's testimony. So did Judge Benson—and he has decided what it was worth.

"No, there is no way of accounting for Mr. Sutfield-Simpson's delusions, except—well, it may be that that hardness, that cynical pose which I was the last to discover in his books, was not merely literary. It may be, too, that the degeneration in ideality, which is the curse bound up in the bundle of blessings given to a man of talent—that *dégringolade* of sentiment to which he is doomed after attaining, or in attaining, success—Have you read about the *boyg*, Ibsen's *boyg*? Do. It is that anemia of authors I am speaking of, symptoms of which show fatally in Mr. Sutfield-Simpson's last work—it may be that this incapacitates him from seeing things other than with the most materialistic eyes.

"But I didn't mean to say all this. What have I said, anyway?" She rose, shaking out her skirts softly, and standing before them in her dark-velvet gown and plumed hat in a gracious attitude of dismissal. "Nothing that you can make use of, I'm afraid. A lot of unintelligible stuff—but it came from my heart. You'll fix it up, won't you? A poor woman who has gone through what I have this past week, who has been attacked in that tender spot where woman is so vulnerable, has not a thorough command of herself and what she should say.

"If I have—inadvertently, and in the confidence begotten of our association and your kindness, gentlemen, during the trial—if I have said anything unkind about Mr. Sutfield-Simpson, you will suppress it, will you not? His punishment must come when his conscience some day convinces him of how terribly he has wronged me. You will suppress it?"

The youngest reporter assured her that they would.

He himself really did. And it was his first valuable lesson in journalism when he saw every word that she had said blazoned in fat, black letters on the first page of all the other newspapers in town.

II

HILARY BELMERE had copies of all the papers in his hand as he went up the stone steps of the Sutfield-Simpson place that evening. He had read every line she had said in every one of them, so that he could have almost repeated the whole.

He became conscious, though, as the discreet little maid opened the door for him, that he could not very well carry these papers up-stairs with him, so he crammed them all in a niche in the hall where a marble Psyche stood a-tiptoe.

But he found them all again, one on top of the other, on the table in the yellow music-room where he was accustomed to wait for her.

Usually he played while he waited, and the grand piano stood open now with the great Chopin *Scherzo* on the rack—an invitation that was ordinarily a command. He did sit down and roll off the imposing introduction with that velvety sureness of touch which, in the concert room, made virtuosi lean back in assured content with what was to come. But that heap of papers behind him affected him like an unpleasant presence of which he could not become unconscious. He pushed his stool away finally with a fortissimo touch on a jangling treble chord, and began to pace up and down.

It was a beautiful octagonal room, its acoustics perfect, its arrangement artistic, its furnishing sumptuously simple. It had been completed only a few months ago under the young artist's own supervision, and it jutted out upon the grounds, an almost circular addition with a wide piazza about it.

The free stretch this piazza provided for his walk drew Belmere out-

doors, and he was tramping restlessly about in the dark when he heard a soft rustle behind him, and turned to see Mrs. Sutfield-Simpson in softly yellowed lace standing in the doorway, the light from the music-room playing upon the outlines of face and figure.

His first glance, as he followed her back into the room, was for the newspapers on the table. They were gone. He set his teeth; their absence affected him as unpleasantly as their presence.

"Why didn't you play it all, Hilary?" Mrs. Simpson motioned to the piano. "I felt I wanted to hear it to-day. It is a shout of melodious triumph."

"I couldn't."

"This affair has jarred you so," she said, soothingly, laying her hand for a moment upon his shoulder to quiet the intensity of mood revealed in his voice. "But never mind; it is all over—all happily over."

"Do you think," he asked, suddenly, "that anything like this can be happily over?"

"You ingrate!" She laughed, lying back in her own low chair. "Would you have considered it happily over if the decision and divorce had been granted to Simpson?"

"Suppose it had?"

"Impossible!"

"But just suppose so."

"Suppose myself—me, Clara Sutfield-Simpson—publicly labeled with the scarlet letter! Suppose Simpson triumphant! Suppose you officially designated as the third in a *ménage à trois*!"

"Yes."

"I decline to suppose any such thing."

He leaned forward to her, bending the long fingers of one hand upon those of the other, as though in them lay, even when dumb, a sixth sense, an additional power of expression. "And yet, Clara," he said, slowly, "verdicts are sometimes in accordance with facts, and—"

"How disagreeable you—" she began.

"—and when they are," he continued; "if they had been this time—Clara—we should have been more to each other—now. Our marriage would have meant more to both of us. Our very sin would have drawn us closer, would have isolated us together from the world that knew. God—I wish it had! I wish it had! I wish you could have cared enough for me to care not at all for anything else. I wish you might have let me avow it all for both of us. . . . Clara, I am ashamed—our lies have shamed me, not what we lied about. If Simpson were to stand at that door, and look in on us now, I should stand humiliated before him."

Her glance followed his apprehensively toward the door that gave on the piazza. But her composure was ruffled only for a moment. Still, she rose and trailed her laces to the piano, where she stood beneath the softly diffused light of the tall lamp that shone down on her beauty and the challenging grace of her poise.

"My dear boy, you are very, very young," she said, fingering the fringe on the lamp's dull yellow shade. "You are unstrung to-night—the effect of contact with ugly realities, and you are an artist—which means a goose in practical things. You talk like a child, and feel like a poet. I talk and feel like a woman. For me, I would not have the thing altered in the slightest—" Her eyes followed his that strayed to the table where the newspapers had been. "No, not in the slightest," she repeated. "He was down, and down unfairly—but I owed him no mercy. Woman owes no mercy to man—none. What is a foible in him is a crime in her. All her buying and selling must be done on the false balances the world provides for her sex. If she equalizes things by a false standard of her own, the result is equity. To ask truth from her is to ask more than the same request calls for from him. I wanted my freedom. I wanted my position. I wanted the comforts, the luxuries I am accustomed to. I wanted the world's respect and its

envy. I wanted its condemnation of him. I wanted all this—and you, too!” She threw back her head superbly, looking down upon him across the room.

“And I wanted—only you,” he said, meeting her gaze intently. “Title to that our love gave me. I have no apologies for that. It is mine. For the rest—I have no right to any of it. From the point of view of conventional position, of wealth, of society,—I am justly the interloper, the *bel-ami* for whom the world has only contempt. That part of your victory—Clara—I cannot share with you. It is that—that part of it that humiliates me, that sends the lies I told rolling back in a nauseating torrent upon me, disgusting me with myself, with—

with—”
“Me!” she cried, exasperated. “And yet the a-b-c of the *bel-ami*, the least the lowest of them feels he owes the woman for her sacrifice, is the little lie that chokes you. You were once not so squeamish, Hilary.”

“You mean I lied to Simpson in action and in words a hundred times to win and keep you. Well! But I lied for a reality—the passion that found and bound us two; not for the bills in Simpson’s pockets; not for so much per cent. on the books he has written; not for the station society owes him and his wife; not for the justification that is fairly his as much as any or all of these!”

She laughed—an exaggerated laugh that told of jangled nerves.

“Another trial and another decision of another court! Are you going over it all again? Wouldn’t it occur to a more considerate man, Hilary, that a woman could hardly bear so much in twenty-four hours?”

Her voice broke. Its weakening was a call to him. He had her in his arms, and she was holding up her lips thirstily to him, listening greedily to his low-voiced endearments, breathing in the change in his eyes, in his voice, in his manner.

“You do love me, then?” he murmured, boyishly.

She looked up, amazed. That very exclamation was upon her own lips.

“Love me well enough to make the sacrifice for my sake? To give up the fruit of this unjust decision,” he pleaded, “retaining only that precious one that leaves you free to marry me?”

“What has come to you, Hilary?” she demanded, impatiently.

“Shame!” he cried, vehemently. “Shame! Shame at the reading of that shameless interview of yours! To me who know, it seems to gloat over the very injustice of the thing. It seems to reveal to me . . . I seem to see Simpson’s eyes fixed forever in contempt upon me, and I seem to feel that I deserve it! Oh, come away, come away, beloved, now—this minute! Leave it all behind—all of it, what your world will say of good or ill—the shameful fine the judge has put upon him—the nauseating victory we’ve won! And when we’re man and wife and far away forever, you shall write a line to him to say it was all true—that you have no excuse to make for it—feel no regret save for—”

“You’re mad! Upon my soul, I believe you’re mad!”

“Clara, I beg of you to marry me now—to-night.”

“And by this very marriage admit all we disproved to-day!”

He nodded.

She smiled with scorn, and turned away.

He followed her. “But surely you will be my wife?”

“After a reasonable time—when all the gossip has quieted down—when another scandal has developed to occupy society. But just now—now, Hilary, we must be very circumspect. My position is all it was—”

“You’re sure of that?”

She looked surprised at the eagerness in his voice.

“You’re sure this trial has not hurt you—not in the least—not in the smallest particular? That nowhere in any one’s mind lurks the slightest suspicion of the truth? That you

stand to-day, though divorced, as securely footed on that social height you so value, as secure as before——?"

She nodded, confident, triumphing in her audacity. "You should see the cards that have been left for me this afternoon. In themselves they're a social vote of confidence. And you should have been here an hour earlier to see old Mrs. Grantham herself—who never accepts an invitation to dinner even from her own grandson—dining informally at my table, to congratulate me, to endorse me! It is not success; it is—in a small way—a furor; a rallying of society to its standard-bearer—myself"—she curt-sided—"at your service."

He drew a long breath. "I am glad."

"Aren't you?" she crowed.

"Yes—because it gives you the opportunity to make restitution; to give all you have for all you took from him; to lift from him the damnable guilt of having basely fabricated a dastardly charge against an innocent woman; to——"

"Hilary!"

"To be my wife and sail with me to-morrow—or never to be my wife——"

"Wait, wait, Hilary!"

"If you had been innocent wouldn't I have waited—all my life, if need be—to spare you, to shield you?"

"Whose fault is it," she cried, infuriated, "that I am not?"

"Mine—mine—and yours. Come, let us both suffer for it—Clara, Clara, is it suffering to be together?"

"Yes!" She tore herself from him. "It is suffering to give up all I have worked for and—yes, lied, to keep. I will keep it—I will, in spite of——"

"In spite of the fact that it will part us forever?"

She wrung her hands. "Oh, what are you saying? What is he to you—that man? How dare you champion his cause—you that he ought to have killed if he'd been a man worth championing?"

"If he'd been that kind of man!" came a voice from the door behind her. "The Lanciottos are never content

merely to punish the Paolos, Francesca."

She shivered. A white mask of fear spread over her face; a sudden terror, as though not till this minute had such a solution occurred to her. Her eyes turned toward Simpson standing at the open doorway that led from the piazza, his revolver in his hand.

Belmere sprang between them.

Simpson waved him back. "She has nothing to fear," he said, laying the pistol on the piano before him, "now that I have heard. I have heard it all. Damn the world! Let it believe that she is snow and I am pitch—what do I care for it, so long as she is punished one way or the other? And do I not know the efficacy of lies, and how faithfully you'd lie again, you two? No—I am satisfied now—if you are, Belmere, and hold to your condition."

Belmere turned his back upon him. "I make no condition with you," he cried.

"No," said Simpson, unmoved, "you make it with your conscience and with her—her greed. She only wanted—all!" He laughed, softly, contentedly, and slammed the glass doors behind him.

She listened to his echoing footsteps till they died away. A long sigh of relief came from her. It wakened Belmere. He stretched out his arms toward her.

"Clara," he begged, "don't think of him—nor anything he said—nor what I said. Think only of our love and that we're free—free to live it openly, fully, passionately—when, where, how we will. Surely we will that it be now—now and forever. Be mine, my wife now—to-night. We'll sail to-morrow; you will not stay to look upon or hear what follows. We'll be all to each other that——"

She ran from him in silent fury, her hands to her ears, that she might no longer hear his voice.

He followed and caught her, and, seizing both her hands in his, "Clara! Clara!" he cried.

"Go! go!" she said. "I can bear no more to-night."

He stood a moment looking at her. Then, without a word, he left her.

Mrs. Clara Sutfield-Simpson's world saw in Hilary Belmore's departure a correlative, if unnecessary, vindication of that spotless lady's name. Time

went by, and the young musician never revisited America. The few friends who remained true to Simpson often wished he would return to his own country, for every year he stayed away seemed to prove the ex-husband a blacker villain. Yet Simpson himself did not repine.



A SOUTHERN TWILIGHT

A LITTLE shallow silver urn,
High in the east the new moon hung;
Amid the palms a fountain flung
Its snowy floss, and there, above,
With its impassioned unconcern,
A hidden bird discoursed of love.

I felt your hand upon my arm
Flutter as doth a thrush's wing,
Then tighten. Sweet, how small a thing
Draws kindred spirits heart to heart!
More was that hour's elusive charm
To us than eloquence or art.

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



HOW HE KNEW

WIFE—What do you think of my picture?
HUSBAND—It will do. Evidently a snap-shot, my dear.
“Why?”
“Your mouth is shut.”



A CHANGE OF LUCK

SPORTLEIGH—I won fifty dollars on a horse-race, old fellow, and lost it before I left the track.
CLUBLEIGH—How's that?
SPORTLEIGH—I rubbed up against a pickpocket who was picking winners.



H YMEN'S altar is an altar of sacrifice.

THE WINGS OF LOVE

LOVE put away his pretty wings,
 All in a package neatly.
 "Alas! why do you so," I said,
 "Sweetheart?" He shook his golden head,
 And answered me, discreetly:

"Since days when gods and goddesses
 Made love on heights aërial,
 Dropped from the skies, I still have sped
 Where'er the vagrant fancy led
 Of lovers less ethereal.

"In merry times of coach and horn,
 Outrider and postilion,
 When Strephon on his ambling steed
 With Chloe paced by lane and mead,
 I rode upon the pillion.

"When Time around the belted world
 Sent countless wheels a-spinning,
 The magic saddle I bestrode,
 And many a breezy 'century' rode,
 My own sly laurels winning.

"Now when, in cushioned luxury,
 No more by rein and lash bored,
 Brave Alfred sits with fair Lucile,
 Expertly guiding his 'mobile,'
 I perch upon the dashboard!

"For miles and miles, up hill and down,
 Where tramps a golf-struck laddie
 Beside a sonsy, bare-armed lass,
 With tender feet upon the grass,
 I follow, playing caddy.

"Love is, alas! no autocrat,
 To choose the way he may do!
 Wherever most do congregate
 Brave men and pretty maids, there Fate
 Bids him go, do as they do.

"So," quoth the young philosopher,
 "Small use is pout or passion!
 I'll label this—have you a pen?—
 I shall not need my wings again
 Till flying is the fashion!"

MARGARET JOHNSON.

THE SMART SET IN JAPAN

By Douglas Sladen

THE smart set in Japan does not know its own mind. The Japanese are arrogant enough to prefer their own institutions to those of other countries; at the same time, they wish to join the Great Powers; and, to do this, they must accept the fashions of the hated West. For, in their hearts, the Japanese do hate the West, though they are sharp enough to see that no nation which does not wear trousers can be a great power. So, in Japan there are two smart sets, the breeched and the unbreeched; and, as there are many Japanese who practise several religions, so are there many who live two lives.

The official smart set, the set which embraces ambassadors and cabinet ministers and politicians and civil servants generally, wear trousers in public. But follow home the immaculate field marshal or pompous courtier, and, within five minutes, you will find him minus breeches or knee-breeches, and comfortably enveloped in a kimono, probably squatting on the floor. The Japanese who wear European dress do not like to wear it; on the contrary, they are as anxious to be rid of it as is a fat woman of her stays.

In Japan, the tailor makes the man. The Japanese, in a top hat or a cocked hat, treats as his better half his wife in bonnet and boots; he lets her walk beside him, and he pays her all sorts of lofty compliments. But, once back in kimono and clogs, the new order changeth, giving place to the old—he is the lord of creation, and she is the Asiatic wife, the wife who, in the street, follows her husband like a maid, and, in the house, mends and brushes his

clothes, awakens him in the morning, makes a cup of tea for him before he leaves his august bed on the floor, and plays the devoted slave generally—not to him alone, but to his father and his mother and any elder brothers he may happen to have, and his brothers' wives. Fortunately, none of these brothers can divorce her from her husband, but his father or mother can, and often they do if they find her an unsympathetic domestic.

The influence of the tailor penetrates the court of Japan. Silk hats and frock-coats are *de rigueur* at the Emperor's garden-parties, and the Empress wears very pretty French gowns and hats—and wears them well. Her ladies dress to match her, but their figures do not match their dresses. In Parisian frocks, the Japanese female form goes in and out at the wrong places; it would really look better in German frocks, which have no particular fit; but the Empress has a good foreign figure, a fact which was always most displeasing to her stepmother-in-law, the Dowager Empress, a lady endowed with the pristine virtues.

Those who know the court only, would imagine Japan to be far more foreignized than it really is. The great politicians, and a few other great noblemen, live in foreign houses, use foreign furniture, give dinner-parties in the foreign style, eat with knives and forks, sit on chairs, and dress like Christians in Sunday attire. Then, as I have said, the Emperor requires that European dress be worn at his garden-parties—of which he has at least two every year—a cherry-blossom party and a chrysanthemum party. The guests are in-

vited to see the Emperor's cherry-blossoms and chrysanthemum-blossoms at their very best, and in the latter the imperial gardens are unequaled. Mr. F. H. Balfour, when he was present at one of these gatherings, saw a plant bearing over seven hundred enormous blossoms.

At these functions, the guests are drawn up in lines, down which the Emperor passes. A few persons, including the principal foreign representatives, are presented to him, and then the Emperor and the princes of the blood royal, the Empress and the court ladies sit down to a champagne luncheon. Unexalted persons have to take their luncheon standing. At these repasts, excellent foreign food and wines are furnished.

In Tokio and Yokohama the foreignized natives have meat on their tables, but in other places fish is the staple diet, and fowls are a luxury. I have never been able to discover if any Japanese are smart enough to eat bread regularly when they are by themselves. Outside the settlements, bread is unobtainable. Rice pudding is always preferred.

The court set of Japan give many balls and dinner-parties. Those who have been to Japan since I have, tell me that the court ladies now dance a great deal; but in my day, for a Japanese lady to waltz with a man to whom she had only just been introduced would have been followed by *hara-kiri*. Then, dancing was left to the foreigners; but the natives were always good at supper. At a ball that I attended, one of the prettiest of the young Japanese peeresses wore a very smart French ball-dress and a pair of very dainty French slippers; but you could see that her dear little feet were brown because she had not descended to stockings. In those days, it had not been recognized as a law of the Medes and Persians that no one in European dress should sit down till he knew how to use a chair, and once I saw a nobleman in English dress clothes sitting on the floor of the supper-room, endeavoring to manipulate a chicken without

the assistance of knife and fork. This could not happen nowadays.

The smart Japanese with European pretensions go in chiefly for dinner-parties. They cannot give afternoon teas, because, in a country where tea is served all day long, no one would know which was the afternoon tea! A busy Japanese household may have a hundred teas a day. But capital dinners are given. However they manage it, the food and wines are always very good, and served in perfect form; the Japanese are wonderfully quick in acquiring etiquette.

It is at dinner-parties, more than anywhere else, that the Englishman meets Japanese ladies. There is no occasion for their husbands to be jealous, because the women rarely speak any English. You go through your dinner as if you were dining at a restaurant with ghosts; but, afterward, there are sure to be some Japanese men who speak English well and are embarrassingly attentive. A Japanese dinner-party fills you with admiration for the *savoir-faire* and dignity of the race.

The houses of the smart set are of two kinds, both of them town houses. The noblemen's seats in the castle-towns need not be taken into consideration; they are chiefly used as sulking-places for those who are out of touch with the present court. One sort of town house is a low native building, built more or less after the style of the dwelling-house which was the centre of the old *daimio's yashiki*; the other resembles the wealthy man's villa in the suburbs of Boston.

The first contains hardly any furniture at all, as the strict Japanese sit on the floor. In the guest room to which foreigners are admitted, furniture is a vanishing quantity. Hanging up in the *tokonoma* is a *kakemono*—one of those long, narrow wall-pictures attached to a roller. In front of this is a vase containing a sprig or two of a flowering tree; and, in the recess beside it, a *chigaidana*, or cabinet, built at ridiculous and severely picturesque angles; there

is a sword-rack, though no swords have been worn for thirty years. The room may contain, too, a valuable screen, one low enough for a man to straddle over; perhaps a table a foot high, and possibly a fire-box, the *hebach* of literature about Japan; but these would probably be brought in only as they were required. When you go into a cottage in England, your hostess often sends in next door for a chair; when you go into a guest chamber in Japan, a *futon*, or flat princess cushion, is placed for you to squat on, a fire-box is brought that you may warm the tips of your fingers, and a smaller fire-box, with a pipe-drawer attached, that you may enjoy a smoke from a pipe the size of a monkey nut; and with these things is always brought an afternoon tea-table, at any hour of the morning, noon or night.

Japanese tea-tables may be round or square or octagonal, but they are sure to have a rim like that on a tray, and to be only a foot high, and to stand, not on legs, but on boxes without bottoms. When you call upon a proud nobleman, he may, as a stiff compliment, have the first lot of tea, which looks as innocent of leaf as it is of milk and sugar, brought in by his wife. The wife will withdraw, but the tea- nuisance will go on as long as you stay, the Japanese theory being that you never cease drinking tea except when the beverage becomes cool. The bedroom arrangements are marked by even greater simplicity. The strict Japanese have no bedrooms during the day, the beds being only quilts which, when not in use, are rolled up and hidden. The boxes, which open the wrong way and do duty as wardrobes, take refuge behind sliding doors, and the paper shutters, which are used to divide the house into as many bedrooms as are required, are removed to allow the whole house to be aired.

The *tokonoma*, I should explain, is a recess about four feet long and a few inches wide. It contains a *dais* a few inches high, on which, in

theory, the Mikado would sleep if he should suddenly knock at the door, and ask for a night's lodging. It represents an alcove large enough to contain his bed. In a land where etiquette and allegory play such a part as they do in Japan, even the Mikado's bedroom cannot be abolished. The *chigaidana* may represent his wardrobe—at any rate, the *kakemono* hung up in the *tokonoma* is there for his benefit, and the vase of tree-flowers is in his honor. I much prefer this kind of nobleman's house to the new style, with its staring foreign carpet dyed with harsh aniline colors, and its hideous and rubbishy foreign furniture. The one is the acme of Japanese good taste, the other is the embodiment of the limitations of the Japanese, for, in matters of taste, these people cannot grasp the Western point of view.

There is one exception to the Japanese incapacity for imitating foreign fashions. The wealthy natives who spend much time in England or America, often dress in the height of English fashion, but, if they are slaves to the crease of the British trouser and the color of the British tie, they are honorably conservative in their dissipations. Although they are quite alive to the merits of champagne and whiskey, they get drunk only off their own *sake*, the effects of which liquor—on a native—possess the advantage of working off quickly and leaving no headache behind it. In this, the Japanese show their wisdom; one trembles to think of the mixture that might be hidden beneath the champagne label best known in Japan!

There are three kinds of Japanese nobles: the old *daimios*, or feudal princes, of the Tokugawa régime—these have received foreign titles in exchange for their territorial titles; the old *kugé*, or court nobles, those who for so many centuries shared the puppet existence of the Mikado—these received equivalent titles, and were treated with peculiar

honor—they were on the winning side; and there have since been created a number of new court nobles, selected for their ability to govern the country, and, for their services, rewarded with titles. From these three sources the smart set of to-day is drawn. Success in commerce obtains no social recognition in Japan.

What are the amusements of the Japanese smart set? They are for men only, judged from the giddy Western standpoint. A Japanese lady has no carriage, because nobody who is not at least a cabinet minister keeps a horse. She can, if she wishes, be pulled about in a perambulator—called, in Japan, *jinrikisha*—but she is not expected to wish it, except as a means of getting somewhere. She does not, like the brazen-faced foreign ladies, drive to take the air in Cherry street; besides the finest portion of the castle of Tokio, there is very little she is ever taken to see, except a flower blossoming at its best, or the maples turning in Autumn; she is not encouraged to make calls; in fact, in the *Onna Dai Gaku*, which is the moral code for women, she is particularly warned against being regular in paying calls or going to church, or, rather, to temples. Being religious is regarded as a sign of flightiness in Japanese women. This idea came from the Chinese, who had it from Confucius. Sometimes, as a great treat, the ladies are taken on a fishing excursion, but only on a sort of house-boat into which no men, except their male relatives, are admitted. They may go to the theatre, but, even there, well-bred women are not expected to go until they are old and ugly, and there, too, they occupy a box with no men but their relations. They are permitted to call on one another, and, during these calls, they take more tea than would be considered credible in any other country.

The well-bred Japanese wife is expected to find enough to do in attending to her children and her home.

The question of a Japanese daugh-

ter's duties does not arise in a smart household, for, in Japan, a girl goes on being educated until she is married.

But how does the smart young man amuse himself?

One might have thought that foreign music would have its attractions, but it has none. Once upon a time, an opera company drew crowded houses somewhere in Japan; yet this was only because the audience mistook the opera for broad farce. The Japanese does not care for foreign theatrical companies, he has no foreign music-halls, and he has a positive prejudice against foreign courtesans, though courtesans enter more into the everyday life of the nation in Japan than in any other country under heaven. Without doubt, they and the *geisha* or singing women—these are not necessarily immoral—form the principal amusement of the men of the Japanese smart set. The former must be sought in the local *yoshiwara*, or pleasure quarter, a place shut in with walls and gates, where they are compelled to reside.

The *geisha* are, for the most part, attached to some famous tea-house. When the Japanese wishes to see a play, he need not hurry through his dinner, or miss the first act of the performance. He does not go to the theatre; the theatre comes to him. He orders at his favorite tea-house the best dinner he can devise, and a performance of *geisha* to accompany it. The *geisha* do not begin their part of the entertainment until their patron has taken the edge off his appetite, and then they adapt themselves to his moods. They sit quite near him, so that he has all the pleasures of the greenroom in addition to the pleasures of the performance. The pauses between the acts are timed according to his fancy, and introductions to the actresses follow naturally; it is not necessary to buy them with diamonds, or to win them by loitering at the stage-door.

In using here the term actress, I am, I fear, incorrect. In Japan there are no actresses. The Japanese dude

must, perforce, content himself with singing-girls.

When he is in Tokio, the gentleman goes sometimes to the *Rokumei Kwan*, or Nobleman's Club. If he plays games at all, except billiards and cards, they are children's games, and these he is too dignified to play in public. At games he is, in fact, an Oriental, and the lack of good horses in Japan has prevented him from cultivating the only active sport in which the East meets the West—polo. He does not hunt; he does not, as a class, shoot; and, though he fishes, it is with tackle that would qualify him for admittance to no angler's club in America. He is a splendid fighter, and brilliant at anything that touches engineering or science, but the fact is that, unlike the Anglo-Saxon, he makes no profession of games; he seeks his relaxation in civilized editions of the harem.

In Japan, an aristocratic dude is not such a fool as he looks, or as other dudes usually are. To be unintelligent is not part of his swagger, as it is with the same class in England.

The race which Japan is making to take her place among the Powers is so keen that no Japanese can afford to be thought a fool. Nor has the fit of his frock-coat or the shininess of his hat eliminated from the Japanese the artistic cravings with which he was born. He will still travel great distances to look at a particularly fine peony-blossom, or to see the iris-beds at Horikiri when every flower is in bloom; he will still go back half-a-dozen times to study some old *kakomono* by a famous master, if he has not been able to understand some particular *motif* in it; and yet the artist may have dashed off the picture in a few strokes. Nowadays, the dude is very apt to enter politics or the army as the best avenues to promotion.

The oddest thing about the Japanese smart set is that they do not seem to have any particular hour for getting up, or any well-defined breakfast. They sit up the best part of the night, and, in the morning, just happen to

leave their beds, and begin the eternal tea-drinking. The idea of taking exercise never occurs to them. They ask scornfully what fun an English gentleman can find in going out to perspire and get in a mess, though they have great endurance when they are driven to use it.

European servants are not employed in Japan; they are expensive, while the best Japanese servants cost only about six shillings a month. A Japanese "swell," with a thousand pounds a year, is considered enormously wealthy. There is only one man in Japan whom an American would call rich. He owns copper mines. Copper is in demand for electric fittings, and electricity is the rising sun in Japan. But the Japanese can live in excellent style on surprisingly little. Their one real extravagance is displayed in the parties they give at tea-houses, with performances by the best *geisha* girls, and here their extravagance has no bounds. They have been known to spend as much on one of these parties as upon the maintenance of their homes for an entire year.

A favorite form of entertaining a guest in a smart Japanese household is to bring out the heirlooms from the godown, or storehouse. A whole staff of servants carries them one by one, wrapped up in green silk cloths, or, if the articles are fragile, in innumerable rolls of green cotton.

First among the reforming influences of Japan may be counted the *Rokumei Kwan*, in the castle of Tokio. This is the property of a few noblemen, its founder, the Marquis Nakashima, having established it as a mixed club for foreign gentlemen and Japanese aristocrats, so that Japanese going to foreign clubs might know the etiquette—a Japanese will die for etiquette. The *Rokumei Kwan* is a very well appointed club. In its reading-room are all the leading foreign newspapers and reviews; its cuisine is excellent; its billiard-tables and other club accessories are of the best.

In my time, there was but one Japanese lady who, with complete

success, met foreigners on their own ground. This was the beautiful Countess Kuroda, the wife of one of the most prominent politicians in Japan. She had caught, from the first, the spirit of foreign entertaining, and she led the foreignizing section of Japanese society. She was essentially the great lady—by position, birth, beauty and manners, and she always allowed herself the privileges accorded to the ladies of the West. She was an exception, it is true; but, then, she would have been an exceptional woman anywhere. She received foreign men as well as foreign ladies, but she forfeited nothing of her "Japaneseness." She was "at home" at any hour, even early in the morning; she went through the form of herself bringing tea to her guests the first time it was offered

to them, and she caused them to be offered relays of tea during the entire time they remained in her house.

I must conclude with a word of apology to the Japanese, the most remarkable people in the history of human progress. I have not been trying to make fun of them, but to instruct my readers by means of contrast. Even the vagaries of their smart set have an end. Playing at European usages enables the Japanese to be at their ease abroad, when they are called upon to represent their country in foreign embassies and cabinets. And they show much cleverness, tact and dignity in acquiring customs which, for the most part, are diametrically opposed to their conception of good sense and decency.



A ROSE

UPON the grave there grows a rose,
It blooms with fragrance of white thought;
If dust can such pure love disclose,
What from our lives may not be wrought?

WILLIAM BRUNTON.



PEACE AT LAST

MR. HOON—Scrappington and his wife have parted.

MRS. HOON—Good gracious! What is the trouble?

MR. HOON—There isn't any trouble now. They have parted.



HE—Do you regard a divorce between us as necessary?

SHE—Not necessary. But I should be happier if the world knew we were living apart.

IN THE VALE OF TEMPE

By Madison Cawein

*"Auch ich war in Arkadien geboren,
Auch mir hat die Natur
An meiner Wiege Freude zugeschworen."*
—SCHILLER.

ALL night I lay upon the rocks:
And now the dawn comes up this way,
One great star trembling in her locks
Of rosy ray.

I cannot tell the things I've seen,
The things I've dreamed I may not speak—
The dawn is breaking gold and green
O'er vale and peak.

My soul hath kept its tryst again
With her, as once in ages past,
In that lost life, I know not when,
Which was my last:

When she was Dryad, I was Faun,
And lone we loved in Tempe's Vale,
Where once we saw Endymion
Pass passion-pale:

Where once we saw him clasp and meet
Among the pines, with kiss on kiss,
Moon-breasted and most heavenly sweet,
Queen Artemis:

Where often, Bacchus-borne, we heard
The Maenad shout, wild-reveling;
And filled with witchcraft, past all word,
The Limnad sing.

Bloom-bodied 'mid the twilight trees
We saw the Oread, who shone
Fair as some form Praxiteles
Carved out of stone.

And oft, goat-footed, in some glade
We marked the Satyrs dance: and great,
Man-muscled, like the oaks that shade
Dodona's gate,

THE SMART SET

Fierce Centaurs hoof some torrent's bank
With wind-swept manes, or leap some crag,
While swift, the arrow in its flank,
Swept by the stag.

And minnow-white the Naiad there
We watched, foam-shouldered in her stream,
Wringing the moisture from her hair
Of emerald gleam.

We saw the oak unclose, and brown,
Sap-scented, from its door of bark,
The Hamadryad tall step down:
Or, crouching dark

Within the old oak's heart, we felt
Her eyes, whose smile made windflowers bloom;
Her look, that round us seemed to melt
Like wild perfume.

There is no flower that opens glad
Soft eyes of dawn or sunset hue,
As fair as the Limoniad
We saw there, too:

That flower-divinity, rose-born,
Of sunlight and white dew, whose blood
Is fragrance, and whose heart of morn,
A crimson bud.

There is no star that rises white
To tip-toe down the deeps of dusk
Sweet as the moony Nymphs of Night,
With lips of musk,

We met among the mystery
And hush of forests—where, afar,
We saw their hearts beat glimmeringly,
Each heart a star.

There is no beam that rays the marge
Of mist that trails from cape to cape,
From panther-haunted gorge to gorge,
Bright as the shape

Of her, the one Auloniad,
That, born of wind and grassy gleams,
Silvered upon our sight, dim-clad
In foam of streams.

All, all of these, I saw again,
Or dreamed I saw, as there, ah, me!
Upon the cliffs, above the plain,
In Thessaly,

I lay, while Mount Olympus helmed
 Its brow with moon-effulgence deep,
 And far below, vague, overwhelmed
 With reedy sleep,

Peneus flowed and, murmuring, sighed,
 Meseemed, for its dead gods, whose ghosts
 Through its dark forests seemed to glide
 In whispering hosts.

'Mid whose pale troops again I spoke
 With her, my soul, as I divine,
 Dim 'neath some gnarled Olympian oak,
 Or Ossan pine,

Till down the slopes of heaven came
 Those daughters of the Dawn, the Hours,
 Clothed on with raiment blue of flame,
 And crowned with flowers:

When she, with whom my heart once more
 Had trysted—limned of light and air—
 Whom to my breast (as oft of yore
 In Tempe there,

When she was Dryad, I was Faun),
 I clasped and held, and pressed and kissed,
 Within my arms, as broke the dawn,
 Became a mist.



CE QUE JE VEUX, JE VEUX

I WANT the Moon.

Pray do not seek to pacify me by offering me stars. They are very beautiful. They would be lovely in a tiara. Some would look well in rings. And I might have a black tulle gown spangled with them, and go to a fancy-dress ball as Night. Or every evening, after it was dark, I might gather them all into a basket, and take them up by handfuls, and throw them back into the sky, making new constellations. That were a game for the gods. But I am not a god—nor a goddess. And I want the Moon.

And do not tell me that planets are better than satellites; that I can have Saturn, with four moons. None of them is the Moon I want. And I do not care to inaugurate trips by air-ships to Saturn, and automobile races on the rings; though those things would be interesting—if I had the Moon.

And do not tell me that the sun is millions of times bigger and more glorious; that I could send him careening through space, crashing into blazing worlds which would burst with terrible explosions as he struck them, and would flash their great fire-brand fragments from pole to pole.

That, too, would amuse the gods.

But I am only a woman.

And I want the Moon.

ELIZABETH HARMAN.

NIGHT THOUGHT

A WINTER day, a silver day,
 With clouds of cream and foam at play;
 Pale tides of sunshine everywhere,
 And frost-flowers in the air.

A chill blue dusk and early night,
 And all the dark dim-lit with white
 Descending lamps that do not glow;
 They are the thick, slow snow.

There is no memory of the moon
 In the great darkness anywhere;
 But I remember how, at noon,
 Your hand lay on my hair.

ZONA GALE.



A FLAT REFUSAL

WILLIE—Let's play we are married.

LITTLE BESSIE—Have you ever played it with any other girl?

WILLIE—No.

LITTLE BESSIE—Then you can't practise on me.



WHY SHE THOUGHT SO

HE—I am a self-made man.

SHE—I thought as much. Your heart doesn't seem to be in the right place.



NOT INTENTIONAL

BANKS—Did you ever know Liarbeigh to tell the truth?

RIVERS—Yes, once; but he corrected himself.

A TERM AT SCHOOL

By Martha McCulloch-Williams

MID-MARCH had stolen April weather—the street was full of soft, windy sunshine, shot through with gusty dashes of fine, stinging rain. Some blackbirds chattered raucously in a big oak at the corner of the court-house yard. A flock of pigeons made little hovering flights from the court-house belfry down to the eaves of the portico; another flock strutted, cooing and preening, over the low front of the livery-stable opposite.

The stranger stood in front of the livery-stable a little at one side of the main entrance. He was fairly panoplied by natives, all more or less intent upon doing the honors of the town. The man at his elbow, Bart Ventress, had spent the day since breakfast-time in showing him the sights of Mayberry. Bart was one of those happy unfortunates whose public spirit is in inverse ratio to their private fortune. He enjoyed booming Mayberry for a good deal more than it was worth, although he knew very well his efforts in behalf of it got him small thanks and smaller credit.

March is a rushing month in the grass country round about Mayberry. That, of course, means that the town, which exists to supply grass-country needs, is likewise rushed. So, for once, everybody felt Bart Ventress had really proved his usefulness to a degree that half justified his very leisurely existence. But, since it was four o'clock, and the bulk of country customers were driving homeward, there were plenty of business men ready, and even anxious, to take up his rôle of guide, philosopher and friend.

Hence the panoply. The stranger, Jack Jennings, affected to overlook it. He was too preoccupied to be bored, even by Ventress's droning chatter. Add that his nerves were on edge over a telegram twelve hours late, and it is easily apparent he was not in a happy frame of mind. But his face was impassive as it was handsome, and somehow he managed to show a decent surface interest in the talk round about. Indeed, the hubbub was in a way soothing—he was almost startled when it came suddenly to a dead stop. Through the silence, he caught the delicate rataplan of small, shod hoofs, the tinkle of fore-chains, the faint burring of rubber-tired wheels. He saw all eyes fixed upon the uppermost street corner. The next minute something came round the corner—something that almost took his breath. It was a pony-phaëton, whose body, a fluted and gilded shell, sat upon sky-blue running gear, heavily picked out with gold. It was drawn by cream-white ponies matched to the last hair of their ivory manes and tails. They wore russet-leather harness, with heavy gold-washed mountings, and went at a slapping pace, under taut reins. Their driver, who sat straight yet easily swaying, upon blue-satin cushions, was big and beautiful, with innocent, wide, brown eyes, looking out of a damask-rose face that was framed in a rippling smother of silk-soft dusky hair.

Evidently her rich gown, all fur and velvet, oppressed her—it was unfastened at the throat, giving enchanting glimpses of a long white neck. But the small black tiger sitting high be-

hind sweltered proudly in his heavy livery, refusing to do more than wipe the sweat from his face. As the phaeton swept down upon the sidewalk group, every head in it was uncovered, every man bowed, for the most part ceremoniously, some few with a flourish of the *chapeau* indicative of gay good-fellowship, and every tongue gave greeting, joyous or constrained.

Bart Ventress swung his hat highest of all, and shouted: "Howdy, Miss Jes'mine!" while everybody else said Mrs. Randell. The lady of the phaeton nodded vigorously, and returned: "Howdy, everybody!" flicked her pones forward, and went out of sight around the next corner but one, in a cloud of mote-dappled sunshine. Jennings stared after her, unconsciously, until Ventress clapped him on the shoulder, saying, with a loud, easy laugh: "I been waitin' all day fer it! I knowed she'd take you off yer feet same as the rest of us, even though you air from big New Yawk."

"Oh, you shut up, Bart," a dapper fellow said. "Let somebody else tell Mr. Jennings. Mayberry can't afford to have its only real romance spoiled."

"Humph! Somebody spells your own self, Bob Baxter!" Bart said, with another shouting laugh. Jennings looked bored. "Romance is wasted on me—I'm wholly practical," he said. A third man, with a student's countenance and a well-brushed rusty coat, answered him, thoughtfully: "Then you must, by all means, hear this story. Bart tells me you're going, in the morning, out to old Marse Dick Randell's—you must know how the land lies, and then walk Spanish, if you expect to do any business with him."

"Indeed!" Jennings said, still with the air of boredom. He was at bottom intensely eager to hear. For the space of half a breath, he had looked straight into Miss Jes'mine's eyes, and gathered there what made his heart beat faster. Ventress whirled him half about, saying, eagerly:

"Don't you believe them fellows—they-all make mountains out of mole-hills. The' ain't ra'alely nothin' much

to tell—only that Jes'mine Brand was a poor girl—mighty poor, mighty pretty, too, with a cross-grained father, no mother, next to no schoolin', and wild! Oh, my!—but nothin' worse'n wild—I'll swa'ar to that on a stack o' Bibles, and I've knowed her, and run with her, since she was knee-high to a grasshopper. Of course, she got talked about—mostly by women so much better off they oughter 'a' been sorry for her. Jes'mine found it out, and acted wilder'n ever—actually drove through town in Lem Bayliss's buggy, smoking a cigarette same as Lem, and when they stopped for soda at Mabin's drug-store, what does she do but holler out: 'Be sure you put a stick in mine!' 'Twas all over the county next week—and some few men even began to say things about her behind thar hands. I remember they said 'em first right here whar we're standin' now. Old Marse Dick heard 'em. He got red, then white—and he's a bad man with that complexion. 'Don't know as it's any news to ye, or anybody's business,' says he; 'but as I'm goin' to marry Jessy Brand to-morrow at twelve o'clock, I'd like whoever has got aught to say about her to come and say it to me.' You bet, though, they didn't sheep—then nor never since. Old Marse Dick married her sure enough—give her twenty thousand in Government bonds for a weddin'-present, and seems all the time like he thought money was made jest to be spent on her. She's got rings for all her fingers—diamond rings at that—and could have bells for her toes if she wanted 'em. She could have the ladies who scandalized her for company—if she would. But she won't—was 'not at home' when they called, though some of 'em saw her walkin' in her rose-gyrden or else up a cherry-tree—"

"Bart, are you never going to stop?" Bob Baxter interrupted. Jennings drew a deep breath, and turned half about, saying, with a pretended yawn: "Thanks awfully for the story—but really, Ventress, you wasted your breath. All I care to know is—whether this old Dick Randell has any

likely two-year-olds. The most of the breeders, plague on them, sell their young stock in yearling form."

"You'll find that out before you're gray-headed," Ventress retorted; "I telephoned the old boss we'd be out there to breakfast."

Possibly Fate, in cynic humor, ordained it that Jessamine Randell, her hands overflowing with jonquils and daffodils, should come upon Jennings at the garden-gate, face to face with her husband. Old Marse Dick was florid and puffy, with a stubby white mustache, a thatch of iron-gray hair, and narrow, deep-set, steel-blue eyes, with a bottle nose between. His clothes bagged where they did not wrinkle; he was devoted to white woolen socks, and seldom tied his shoes. A well-fitting hat became an object of passionate attachment—he never parted with it until it was battered and shapeless beyond expression. By contrast, Jennings, straight, lean-loined, lithe, clean-shaven, close-shorn, clothed after the fashions of Broadway and Piccadilly, was like the prince of a fairy tale—all the more since she had been half the night awake, dreaming of his eyes. The waking had made her pallid, but, at his touch upon her hand, she grew rosy as the morning. He said nothing beyond the common-places of greeting, but, before he went away, looked at her again in a way that told her many things.

He came again next day, and the next, and the next. The two-year-olds were all he could ask, but somehow the trading hung fire. He had to consult his racing partner, his trainer, the authorities of the Jockey Club. Further, it was not easy to make up his mind as to exactly what animals would best serve his purposes. After the first day, old Marse Dick left him pretty much to himself, saying aside to Ventress, with a disdainful laugh: "Huh! I'd give this skinflinty fellow a couple o' colts to git rid of him—he's so pizen skeered o' his money—only, I promised Jessy she should have all they fetched—and everybody knows how mortal hen-pecked I am."

At the week's end, Jennings evidently plucked up his courage. He bought, at round prices, an Esher colt, a Meddler filly, and a Topgallant gelding. Jessamine got the price of them in beautifully crisp, new five-hundred-dollar bills. She was oddly loath to take it. "You—you've done already gimme such a heap more'n I deserve," she said, thrusting the money away. Then old Marse Dick laughed his hugest laugh, and crushed the money into her hands, saying: "Honey, as long as my bargain suits me, don't you be raisin' no objections."

As Spring drew on, he saw a change in her—a change that alarmed him. She slept badly, started at little things, grew red or white over nothing at all, and, at last, toward the middle of May, broke down into a fit of hard sobs. She had not cried before since she was a tiny child. Old Marse Dick was for having a doctor, but Jessamine would not listen to it. So he was driven to ask advice from Bart Ventress, who was, he felt, next to himself, Jessamine's most steadfast friend. Bart scratched his head hard, then brightened and said: "Lordy, Marse Dick, why didn't we think of it sooner? Miss Jes'mine wants a change. That big house and all them fineries wears on her. Send her off to the Springs, and let her play she's a girl again—in a month she'll be right as a trivet."

"To be shore she will," old Marse Dick said, wringing Bart's hand; "and she's got to go—whatever she says about it."

Jessamine went—but with the look of a woman in a dream. Even her enemies softened to her piteous face. She went alone—the Springs were hardly a day's journey off. "You—you won't mind if I don't write—I ain't no scholar at all," she said to her husband, clinging to his hand. Then old Marse Dick smiled, proudly. "We've done fixed that—Bart and me," he said; "we've done wrote a whole passel of letters fer ye—here they air—in pink and blue kivers, you see, all stamped, with my name on the backs. 'Slong as you're well and satisfied, send

pink ones—I'll know what they mean. If you're sick, or want anything—me, or money, or to come home, or have Bart come after ye, why, you chuck the blue ones in the mail bag."

Jessamine broke down again at that, and, after she had sobbed herself sick, declared she would not go. But old Marse Dick was inflexible, so she was sent away with a flourish—five big trunks, a purse cram-full, and a section of the parlor-car overflowing with roses. She got safe to her journey's end, and, for a fortnight afterward, mailed a pink letter every day, laboriously printing in the vacant spaces between Bart Ventress's fine, flowing hand: "I am beter, your wife jessy-Mine." Old Marse Dick treasured the letters far above rubies, even when, as happened after a while, they contained none of the pathetic scrawls. He sat smoking and ruminating in the twilights, and quite made up his mind that next Winter he would pay Bart Ventress any reasonable price to come quietly and help Jessamine to a knowledge of the three *R*'s. It was shameful—the way she had been left to run wild. He had a great mind to sell out and take her away from all the toil and strife. Then he looked at his fields, sniffed the dewy fragrance of garden and orchard, and caught the gleam of headstones in the strengthening moonshine, and knew he could never go. His father, and his father's father had been there before him. Shyly, with vague, wordless implorings, he hoped for children of his own to come after him.

In a June twilight, when these longings for her were particularly poignant, Jessamine gazed with straining eyes down upon the stir and glitter of a New York street. It was all blurred and wavery—she sat at a ninth-story window in one of the most fashionable bachelor-apartment houses. The suite was throughout quietly magnificent. The tenant of it, Mr. Jack Jennings, had almost as great a fondness for art as for sport. He came in so softly that Jessamine did not know of his presence

until his arm was about her neck, her head drawn back for a kiss. She sprang up instantly, pushing him away, and saying, eagerly: "Did you get it, Ja—I mean Mr. Jennings? My divorce, you know—I can't let you kiss me while I am old Marse Dick's wife."

Jennings laughed, indulgently. "My Jessamine, you are delicious; simply delicious!" he said. "But understand, sweetheart, there is no need to talk of divorces, or even of marriage, now that you are here—in my apartment—alone with me."

For a minute, Jessamine stared at him, uncomprehending; then, as his eyes, his quick breath, enlightened her, she turned on him in fury. "So—you lied!" she said, whitening to the lips. "You told me I had only to come with you into another state, and the law would set me free—free to be your wife. Tell me why you did it?"

The question cut; Jennings was bad enough, yet not wholly callous. In the beginning, Jessamine's beauty had tempted him—the devil of opportunity had waited on temptation, and necessity inexorable driven him hard. Metaphor aside, he had made mad love to Jessamine throughout those days of seeming vacillation. They were days of torture for him—things were going very badly—a dozen schemes had gone up in smoke. He knew unless he could raise twenty-thousand dollars, and raise it at once, his turf career was at an end, and not a good end. So he had let himself take the bonds she pressed on him while she steadfastly refused him her lips. He had meant, of course, to return them—as he had also meant to give her back the price of the horses. She was so dearly, so recklessly generous, he was in honor bound not to let her suffer. But things had kept on going wrong—besides, the longer he was away from her, the more he wanted to see her, to hear her soft, slurring speech, to feel the magnetic pressure of her hand. It was easy to persuade himself that he owed it to her first of all to rescue her from a life of desert dullness. She had not been wax in his hands—still she

believed in him, and trusted him so blindly, he did not doubt his power to make her see things through his eyes.

"I think I did it—because I loved you," he said, after a minute of hard breath; "a little, too, because—you love me; is not that excuse enough for anything?"

He approached her, with open arms and pleading eyes. Jessamine waved him back. "If you touch me, I will kill you," she said, low down in her throat. Jennings let his arms fall, laughing unpleasantly. "You beautiful, ignorant fool," he said; "you are only making things harder—for yourself. I shall leave you now. Tomorrow I hope to find you more sensible."

As he passed through the heavy curtains, Jessamine fell on her knees. She knew no more of prayer than its attitude—all church ministrations had gone over her wilful head. What was it the woman at the Springs had made her little sickly child say every night? In a choking whisper Jessamine repeated:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
And if I die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

"Oh, dear Lord, bless Lolie, make her well, and make her a good girl."

She wanted to say bless Jessamine, but somehow dared not. Still on her knees she added, brokenly, "Dear Lord, bless old Marse Dick!" Then a great rush of tears drowned speech and thought, but only for a minute. The moon peeped in at the window, fair, familiar, friendly. The sight gave her courage—the fine, invincible courage of ignorance. Very shortly, she was out in the streets, heavily veiled, carrying nothing with her beyond the few dollars in her purse. Her trunks had not yet arrived, and to Jennings she had entrusted the most part of her money. She was glad of it—it would make him less eager to search for her. Keeping step with the crowd, she was swept to an avenue with brightly-lighted cars crawling or hurrying up and down it. She sprang

on one and sat still until she saw the arc-lights outside glimmer on young, green leaves. In a little while, she was in a park, dusky, dewy-fresh, and full of the good earth-smell that made her ache with homesickness. She walked there, keeping craftily away from the lights and people, until sleep overcame her.

At daylight, a policeman found her, prone on the turf, in the pose of a tired child. He was young—he had a baby girl, and a sister nearly as beautiful as Jessamine. He sent her straight to Father John and the sisters. They made her kindly welcome, but among themselves, shook despairing heads over her. Spirited, beautiful, wholly friendless, wholly ignorant, what was there for her but the broad road? Close-mouthed, too. The most adroit questioning got nothing out of her. Evidently, she had good reason for keeping away from her friends. After a day or two, they gave her choice of speaking and being sent back whence she had come, or earning her living by scrubbing.

"I'll scrub—it's better than I deserve," Jessamine said. She kept on saying it, while the weeks rolled themselves into months. It was weary work, but she put her whole heart in it. Somehow the long-straining ache after a hard day seemed to ease a little the gnawing pain at her heart; she knew the root of the pain—it was remembering how old Marse Dick had looked at her the last time. And she had let herself believe she loved Jennings!—Jennings, who had robbed and fooled her to irretrievable shame. She had learned to pray—therefore she prayed to escape all sight of him—the mere memory of him made her murderously angry. She had learned other things, too—how the world would look at her flight—how trebly impossible it was that she should ever make anybody understand that she had escaped the fowler's snare.

Many things came back to her with new force—the maxims and precepts of the prim gentlewomen she had delighted to flout and defy. She under-

stood now why they had held aloof—it was not as she had thought, all out of purse-pride and envy. Laboriously, she set herself to remedy her deep ignorance, poring over readers and copy-books whenever she was not too tired to keep her eyes open. It was harder than the scrubbing—still, she persevered. Some day, before she died, before he died, old Marse Dick should have a letter written by her own hand, and saying only: “I was wicked—bad—but not the way you had to think; and I am living straight and mean to die straight—because I love you, when it is too late.” She would give no address, no name even but Jessamine, yet she knew he would believe her, and be comforted in the belief.

The sun got low, the nights and mornings were nipping cold. She knew how cold, because she worked in an office-building, getting up at three o'clock to clean halls and stairways before office hours, and going back at five to help with the rooms. Often it was ten o'clock before she was free—she was so strong, so deft-handed, so willing, whatever required nice care was turned over to her. She did not mind the hours—if, in going or coming, men said stupid things to her, she had only to walk away and leave them. But it galled her dreadfully when one generous magnate whose brasses and mahogany she had polished with extra care, tossed her a gold piece as a tip, and attempted to help himself to a kiss. As he got up somewhat ruefully from the carpet where he had measured his length, she said to him, with slow disdain:

“Next time you had better make sure your money and your kisses are wanted.”

She got home toward noon, quivering all over, every nerve unstrung. It had been a long, hard morning, extra hard, without reckoning the polishing and what it brought about. As she let herself in, tears blinded her—instinctively, she stumbled toward the stair foot, and walked straight into a man's arms. Old Marse Dick was in wait for her—he held her gently away, looked down at her, without seeing anything very clearly, and said, persuasively: “Honey, don't you reckon it's about time you ware comin' home?”

A month afterward, they were back home, with all Mayberry agog as to what had happened, which everybody guessed at, and nobody knew. Upon the second day, Jessamine, finer than ever, drove the cream-white ponies slowly through the streets. Her husband, in the crowd before the livery-stable, said, as she passed: “No—she ain't fa'rly got her color back—not yet; but it'll come all right, now her mind is easy. Ye see, she fretted so over whut she didn't know, she went and took a term at one o' them fancy Summer schools—and I'm bound to believe the lessons was mighty hard.”

His foot was in the stirrup; at the last word, he mounted and rode headlong away. As he went, Bart Ventress said, subduedly: “Hats off, everybody! Three silent cheers for old Marse Dick!” It was incomprehensible, of course, but somehow every man who heard him obeyed gladly.



WRITING FOR MONEY

“I BEGAN writing for money,” said the literary hack, “during my first year at college. Most of my literary efforts at that time were in the form of epistles addressed to my father.”

COLLINETTE

MY garret was an empty place—
Four walls and nothing more—
Until the feet of Collinette
Tripped lightly through my door,
And lo! the walls were hung with silk
And silken-piled the floor.

My cupboard held a beggar's dole—
A crust and scanty wine—
Till, 'neath the hand of Collinette,
My bread was food divine,
My wine the nectar kings might sip
From carven cups and fine.

My Muse was but a beggar maid
Who whined for scanty fare,
Till Collinette had draped her robe,
And filleted her hair;
And now, behold, a goddess stands
Who bids me do and dare!

I mocked at Love—an infidel!—
With sorry jests and quips,
Till Collinette upon my eyes
Laid Love's own finger-tips;
And smiled upon me with his smile,
And kissed me with his lips.

Oh, you, who starve in loneliness,
Beggar or king, my kin,
One prayer have I for both of you,
One hope you yet may win:
That, some day, through your open door
Your Collinette trips in.

JOHN WINWOOD.



TESTED

CORA—Are you sure you will be able to support me, dear?
MERRITT—Why, yes. It's cheaper to be married than engaged.

THE VERGE

OH, tell me, traveler, I pray,
 Where my slain Love lies dead!
 My soul has wandered up and down,
 By grief and terror led,
 But found no token save the drops
 Her poor bruised feet have bled.

Along the cypress-shaded way,
 Strange shadows come and go;
 The ghosts of all Love's buried hours
 Walk by me, pale and slow;
 But I would rather go alone,
 Because they beckon so.

Further I fare along the road;
 But there is nothing here
 Save empty spaces and the glooms
 Where grope weird shapes of fear—
 The grim, mad phantoms of the mind
 That stare and mock and leer.

Somewhere there is a fearsome place
 Where all dead things lie cold:
 Prayers, passions and forgotten tears,
 Kisses, and lies long told,
 Shame, soft caresses, sleep and faith—
 They all lie there and mold.

There Love may lie. But my tired feet
 Will never find the way.
 They falter. The Lethean waves
 Lap round them, cold and gray.
 In those dead waters one may rest
 Until the Judgment Day.

ELSA BARKER.



CERTAINLY

"SHE'S a girl after my own heart."
 "Then she's pretty likely to get it."



A WOMAN is never happy until she has made her husband confess all; and
 then she is miserable.

PLEASANT DREAMS

By Tom Masson

“ONE of the most extraordinary things to me,” said the first family skeleton, “is the common belief that there is only one of us.”

It was midnight in the luxurious country mansion, the home of one of our wealthiest and most important citizens.

“That comes,” said the second family skeleton, “from tradition. There was a time when there was only one of us. He served for all purposes. He lived in a closet most of the time, and was dragged forth only on state occasions—hence the delusion that many entertain to-day.”

“They forget entirely,” said the third family skeleton, “that this is a time of specialists. As if, in this enlightened age, one skeleton could do the business for this family.”

At which sally, every one of them, of course, laughed.

“Why,” said the fourth family skeleton, “as a matter of fact, it takes a syndicate.”

The first family skeleton rapped on the table with his right metatarsal.

“Now, gentlemen,” he said, “to business. The daughter of the house, as you all know, comes of age to-morrow. We must decide what is to be done with her. First, then, let her be brought down here. Four of you will go up-stairs and get her.”

At this, four of the family skeletons filed solemnly out of the room. Silently, they ascended the stairs. Silently, they entered the room where the sleeping daughter of the house lay dreaming. Her lips, slightly parted, were as red as June roses; her cheeks,

full and round, held the lambent glow of health. Her throat, as it heaved with each inspiration, was white and firm with curves of beauty.

The four skeletons stood, one at each corner of the bed, and stared down at her from eyeless sockets.

“I presume,” said the skeleton at her right hand, “that if, within this osseous framework of mine, there were again rigged up and fastened to the sides that thing entitled a heart, it might beat responsively to this touching sight. As it is, I have no feeling for her. Have you, brothers?”

The other skeletons grinned.

“None,” they replied in chorus, “but the stern voice of our duty. Where duty calls us we must go.”

Then they lifted the sleeping girl, and bore her down to their companions. And they laid her quite correctly and skilfully on the table. Covered with the white, silken sheet, she lay there, a central figure of innocence and purity.

“And now,” said the head skeleton, “before assigning ourselves to our respective stations, let us first diagnose this case. Just what is the matter with this fair young thing?”

“First, money,” said the second skeleton. “Her father, by religiously robbing the widows and orphans, bought for her mother a place in society which she is about to succeed to. Money has made her selfish, cruel and artificial.”

“Good!” said the head skeleton. “Number three, what else is the matter with her?”

“Defective education,” said number three, promptly. “She can speak

French, read and play music, drive a four-in-hand, and mix all kinds of drinks. But her character is anemic. That is, her moral perceptions have been blighted. She imagines that the world was made for her purpose, whereas she was made for the world—if she knew it."

"Enough!" said the head skeleton. "Now, gentlemen, once more to business. Remember that there is work for willing bones to do. I shall now assign you to your several tasks."

Turning to the second skeleton on his right, he said:

"You will have charge of her social ambition—see that nothing interferes with it. Teach her to know when to snub, when to grovel—teach her when to crush.

"And to you"—turning to number three—"will be assigned her matrimonial ventures—whom to marry, how much to marry and how often. See that you do not neglect your task, for upon much marrying depends the whole fabric of social success.

"And to you"—turning to number four—"will be left the sacred rights of the children. In the first place, see that there are none. They are not

only bad form, but in her station of life so useless. Do your duty, therefore, and fail not.

"And to you"—turning to number five—"must be left the task of preserving her beauty. Keep her natural complexion going as long as possible, and don't resort to artificial methods until hygiene fails. Above all, don't bleach her hair until absolutely necessary. That is to say, work nature as long as possible, and substitute art only at critical points.

"And to the rest of you, look alive and keep her restless and relentless, with a profound sense of the value of the complex, and a true love for the trivial. Now take her away, with my blessing."

The next morning the daughter of the house said sleepily to her maid:

"Marie, last night I had a beautiful dream."

"What was ze dream, *ma'm'selle*?" asked Marie.

And the daughter of the house replied, with a reminiscent sigh:

"I dreamed, Marie, that I had ahead of me a marvelously successful career."



'NEATH THE CAPTION OF "CAPS"

WHEN Polly first I met, it seemed
 In her I glimpsed a dream I'd dreamed—
 A dream that spurred me on to woo;
 And *captivated* soon I grew—
 A natural consequence, you see,
 When Polly set her *cap* for me.
 Though not a *captious* chap at heart,
 In other maids I found no art
 To win me, rapt and wonder-eyed,
 From *captivating* Polly's side.
 A slave I grew to each *caprice*
 Of hers, nor deigned to pray release.
 As if to *cap* the climax, Fate
 Induced me to *capitulate*—
 For could I else than *captured* be
 When Polly set her *cap* for me?

ROY FARRELL GREENE.

THE JUDGES

By Temple Bailey

"I MAY not have a belief," said the Man of the World, idly, "but I have a code."

"Is it satisfying?" The Doctor of Divinity was a little wearied with ethical discussions which led to nothing.

The Man of the World blew gray rings from his cigarette, and settled into the lazy comfort of his basket-chair.

"It suffices. Its foundation is honor, not faith."

The Doctor of Divinity shook his head, doubtfully.

"Define honor," he said.

"Er—well, a man who pays his debts, who never goes back on his friend, and who shields a woman, is a pretty good sort of fellow."

"Considering the last clause, I would suggest that a better man is one who gives a woman no cause to be shielded."

Lothrop laughed—the hearty, irresponsible laugh of self-satisfied manhood.

"There comes your impossible standard, my dear Carleton. One may flirt and flirt and still not be a villain—provided one keeps the details to one's self."

Having thus brought the discussion to a point where cynical realism seemed to triumph over Puritanical idealism, Lothrop left his friend, and strolled down to a brilliant group gathered on the lawn in front of the hotel, whence, presently, a girl detached herself, and walked beside him down the rose-bordered path.

She was very young, so young that her hair was tied with a ribbon, and the gown that she held a little awkwardly

above her high-heeled slippers was her first long one; so young that as she passed the porch, and waved her hand to the Doctor of Divinity, he was thrilled by the intense recognition of her possibilities.

Before he could respond to her greeting, however, she swept her ruffles out of the rustic gate, and was gone.

Carleton felt that when he mentally classified her furbelows as ruffles, he had taken a distinct step forward. Wise in matters theological and socialistic, it was only of late that he had come to a state of mind where rose-wreathed hats and misty scarfs were things of grave moment, where a belt had definite value when encircling a slender waist, where neck ribbons were important, and where little lace edges and pink ribbons, threaded through a mysterious something called "beading," acquired an interest far beyond their intrinsic worth.

All of which argues a situation dangerous to the peace of mind of a man who had hitherto been concerned with serious things; and yet, he was beginning to reason that there could be nothing deeper than the feeling called forth by the presence of Anne Reeves.

She was the incarnation of ideals carried over from his boyhood. In the depths of her gray eyes, Carleton saw truth and childlike trust and innocence, and he valued them as a man who had striven to retain them in himself. Lothrop valued them, too, but differently, as the man of the world, who, giving nothing, demanded all.

She divided her time between them, impartially. She was Carleton's good

comrade in the out-of-door sports he loved, while Lothrop read to her in quiet nooks, and danced with her, or sang to her in his perfect tenor.

To-night she had gone with Lothrop, and Carleton, with a sudden shake of his broad shoulders, rose and went with long strides toward the little bay where his boat was tied.

Over the earth brooded the hush that comes between day and darkness. The sound of the waves on the little bay was stilled, and it lay, opalescent, the rushes on the edge shining gold where the sun touched them.

Then, with softly dipping oars, he pushed out into the stream, and let the boat drift.

An hour later, floating in the darkness, he passed two people. He could not see them, but he recognized Lothrop's voice. He waited with uplifted oars for the other voice, but the laugh that rang out had a deeper, maturer note than the one he had expected.

"Mrs. Fuller," he breathed; then, with swift, powerful strokes, he rowed back to land.

He found Anne Reeves on the big seat on the terrace that overlooked the bay. Just out of hearing, a group of old ladies gossiped under the shelter of a pavilion.

Anne welcomed him with the frankness that knows no self-consciousness.

"Why didn't you come before?" she asked.

"I thought you were with Lothrop," said Carleton, as he dropped down beside her.

She wore a lacy, filmy wrap with long ribbons. Carleton possessed himself of the end of one of the ribbons. It was something tangible to grasp. One needed an anchor, as it were, when a snowflake hand lay within an inch of one's own.

"No," she said, slowly; "he has gone out with Mrs. Fuller."

There was trouble in her voice. Carleton dropped the ribbon, and grasped the back of the rustic seat. He could dig his nails into that. "Why didn't you go?" he asked.

"He—he didn't ask me." Her laugh had a tremble in it, and she wound her arms into the wrap in an ungraceful, but appealing, fashion, as a child might hug to itself some little misery.

"What did you do to him?"

"Nothing, but he knows I can't go on the river so late. Not that I mind, but it worries Aunt Helen. She is such a responsible chaperon, now that mother is away. And, besides, it wasn't really the proper thing to ask me, was it?"

Carleton hesitated to condemn his rival.

"Your aunt should certainly be the best judge."

"But Mrs. Fuller went." Again there was the note of trouble in Anne's voice.

"She was very foolish," said Carleton, and his voice had a most ominous clerical ring.

Anne leaned back in her seat, and surveyed him, indignantly.

"Why?"

"She should not have gone," he preached.

"He should not have asked her," she defended.

The Doctor of Divinity smiled in the darkness, as he recognized the eternal differences in the masculine and feminine point of view; then he subtly turned the conversation to other things, until at last, the charm of the night working upon them, they fell into sympathetic silence.

The moon, rising slowly, hung like a golden ball over the bay. In the faint light Anne, sitting with rapt face, looked like a creature from another world. Up at the hotel, the music was playing dreamily, there was the fragrance of the salt sea in the air, and the "lip, lip" of waves at their feet.

Then Carleton asked a question. It was the inevitable question, and all at once this seemed the inevitable hour. Perhaps something in his Calvinistic training intensified Carleton's conviction that in all the world this one woman was his foreordained mate.

Yet he trembled as he waited for

her answer, for, before the perfection of her womanhood, all the achievements of his manhood lay in the dust.

"I could never marry you," said Anne, white with the emotion that comes to a young girl in the supreme moment. "I should be afraid. Some day, I should do something wrong or frivolous, and that would be the end of it."

"Of what?"

"Happiness."

"Is there any one else?"

"No—oh, no!" but her voice faltered. She went on, hurriedly: "It is only that I think a man of the world might be so much more forgiving—lenient—to one's faults."

Then Carleton remembered.

There had been a day not long ago, when he and Lothrop had argued about Mrs. Fuller—Mrs. Fuller with her hard nature and her winning ways, whom Anne loved, and to whom she demanded that others should show consideration. There was a Mr. Fuller in town, but the fact of his existence did not press heavily on his wife.

"He is awfully jealous," Anne had said, "and he treats her dreadfully."

"Perhaps she is to blame for the jealousy," Carleton had said, slowly. It had hurt him that Anne should be initiated into the domestic infelicities of such a woman.

"You are always unjust to her," Anne had cried, and her eyes had filled with tears.

"Mrs. Fuller is a very good sort," Lothrop had said, with his careless smile, and Anne had turned to him gratefully. But Carleton could not compromise. He knew that Lothrop despised Mrs. Fuller, yet he kept up a half-flirtation with her, playing her off against Anne, while Carleton, having judged her for what she was, let her alone; and Anne, seeing only the unkindness of the act, and not knowing the motive, condemned accordingly.

"So you think me hard?"

Carleton reached over and took in his, for a moment, the slender hand.

"You don't know—you don't know, Anne," he said.

"But I could never do it." Anne's hand was withdrawn. "I could never do it." And in spite of the appeal of his passionate eloquence, he could not move her.

At last, he went away, and sat alone in a dim corner of the hotel porch, and smoked. It was the one indulgence of his ascetic life, but to-night the flavor seemed gone from his cigar, and he loathed the noise and bustle of the big hotel, the click of high heels on the polished floor of the ball-room, the tinkle of the mandolin under a tree near by—where man and maid sang to the moon.

He wanted Anne—he wanted her; and Lothrop had first place in her heart. In a thousand little ways, he could see that care-free youth had responded to care-free worldliness. He moved restlessly. He knew he could cherish her in a way that Lothrop could not—Lothrop with his enthusiasms and his hardness, Lothrop with his probing cynicism that in the end would tear away her ideals.

Suddenly, he was roused from his musing. Anne had come around the corner of the porch. Excitement shone in her eyes.

"Mr. Fuller has come," she said. "He came on the night train. He is asking for his wife, and she is still out there with Mr. Lothrop."

"Well?"

"Don't you understand?" she demanded. "He is so jealous!"

"I will go and bring them in." Carleton jumped to his feet.

"No," said Anne, "you can't do that. He is going down to the pier to wait for them."

In childish impatience at his slowness in grasping the enormity of the situation, she pulled his sleeve.

"What shall we do?" she urged. "Say something."

"I might go down to the peninsula and stop them. They will have to pass that coming back."

"Even if they walked up, he would see them alone, and know, and it is so

late." For the old chaperons were gathering up their wraps, and looking around for stray charges.

"There is just one way," asserted Anne, positively. "I shall go up to my room, and auntie will think I am there for the night; then I shall slip out again, and we can go to the point, and come back with them."

"No," said Carleton; "it is no place for you." He did not wish her mixed up in it at all, she was such a quixotic little thing.

"It is the only way," she said, "and I am going. If you are not at the edge of the pines when I come out, I shall go alone."

But he was there, and they went through the solemn rows of sighing trees, she clinging to his arm, as they followed the dim line of the path.

The point was a narrow peninsula, that, reaching around the little bay, separated it from the rougher waters without. When they reached it, there was no sign of the wayward boat.

"We will wait," announced Anne, and she sat down on the fragrant needles that strewed the bank at the edge of the bay.

Carleton threw himself beside her, and they sat in silence for a while. There was no sound but the swash of the waves and the faint creaking of the wind-swept pines.

The sky, a star-studded dome, met the darkness of the water, and in all the vastness of the oval thus formed they were alone. It was as if in the whole world there were but one man and one woman, as it might have been before the earth teemed with life, and cities were made, and society built up false standards.

Anne shivered as the wind blew colder, and Carleton stripped off his coat.

"No, no," she protested, "I don't want it."

"If you don't I shall take you home," he said, and so she permitted him to draw it around her, buttoning it up under her little oval chin. But when, a little later, he heard a weary sigh, he stood up.

"We must go. It is too late for you to be here."

"But Mrs. Fuller is still out."

"If people must talk," he said, shortly, "I don't choose that they shall talk about you."

"Why not about me, as well as about her?" defiantly.

Carleton groaned.

"Anne," he said, "little child, you don't know how men feel about such women as you. You are so high above us, so dear, that we want to keep you from everything else——"

"But Mrs. Fuller is my friend, and she is not—oh, she is not to blame, she has such a hard time——"

"I am not blaming her. Only, I cannot take care of her—and you I must protect. Come, we must go."

There was a note of strong command in his voice, and Anne obeyed it instinctively. She rose to go, and then, all at once, they heard the beat of oars.

Fifteen minutes later, Mr. Fuller, impatient, raging, ran down to meet the little boat. In the stern stood the tall figure of a man who was helping a woman up the steps of the pier. The waiting husband clutched at the woman's arm.

"You are in at last," he stormed.

"Why, Mr. Fuller!" cried a gay voice. "You here?" and Anne's laugh rang out full and clear. Her head was thrown back, and, in the moonlight, she looked like a gay child, happy with the realization of pleasure. Carleton and Lothrop were amazed at the perfection of her acting.

She leaned down over the boat. "Mrs. Fuller! Mrs. Fuller!" she said, "do you know who is here?"

Then two other figures came out of the darkness, and, as his wife came up the steps, Mr. Fuller turned his suspicious eyes on Anne.

"You were with her all the time?" he demanded.

"Of course. She is a splendid chaperon."

"I should imagine it," scornfully; "they told me at the hotel that she had gone out alone—with Mr. Lothrop."

"They make so many mistakes at the hotel," said Anne, calmly.

Mrs. Fuller greeted her husband without enthusiasm, and presently they went away together.

Anne, standing between the two silent men, fingered the ribbons of her white wrap, nervously.

"You heard?" she whispered, her glance fitting from Carleton's grave face to Lothrop's with its cynical smile.

"Of course you did," she went on, before they could answer; "I lied deliberately—I made him talk to me, for if he had asked either of you—what would you have said?" she asked Lothrop, suddenly.

"A man of honor always shields a woman," said Lothrop.

"And you?" to Carleton.

"Don't ask me," he pleaded.

"You would have told the truth?"

Carleton knew that he was standing judgment.

"Don't ask me," he said again.

"You would not have lied?"

"No."

As the sharp negative came forth, Carleton felt that he had broken the last bond that held her to him. He saw her waver, then turn from him to Lothrop, sure of sympathy.

But Lothrop was bitterly chagrined. Helped by Anne in an embarrassing situation, he blamed her for her deceit in explanation. Why could she not let it alone? Out of his distrust of human nature, born of the knowledge of his own frailties, he judged her hardly. His code, having provided for the honor of the man, did not teach faith in women.

"It was just like a woman," he said, and his tone cut.

"No," Anne's shaking hand went up to her face; "it was not like me—I never did such a thing in my life—never." She groped for the rough bench on the edge of the pier, and Carleton took her cold fingers, and guided her into it, where she sat huddled in a white heap.

"You see, we thought you an angel—and find you human," went on Loth-

rop, with the deliberate cruelty of the angry man.

Anne's wet eyes pleaded—*Et tu*—she was stunned by the suddenness of her condemnation from such a source.

"I shall never forgive myself," she said, wearily; "but it will hurt me all my life, and you make it worse——"

Carleton was at her side with both of her hands in his.

"There is no condemnation, child," he comforted. "What are we that we should judge?"

But her eyes were on Lothrop.

"I do not understand," she faltered, "when you blame me for the thing you would have done yourself."

Lothrop shrugged his shoulders.

"But you are a woman," he said, "and a woman should be different."

She stood up, while the lace wrap, dragging behind her, gave her a fictitious height. All at once, she seemed invested with a new dignity. Out of the knowledge of good and evil had been born her womanhood, while her childishness had slipped from her forever.

"So you had thought we might strike a balance," she said, bitterly; "that I could play the Mrs. Jekyll to your Mr. Hyde?"

She flung the words at him, and he looked at her in amazement. There was something almost ludicrous in her outburst, but he was too much stung to see it. For once, she had roused him, and, under the polished exterior, he had the roughness of a selfish man.

"From present evidences," he said, with a sneer, "I think we might have been two of a kind."

Then the Doctor of Divinity did a most unpriestly thing.

He took a step toward the Man of the World.

"Get out," he said, shortly. For a moment, they faced each other, then controlled will conquered over reckless bravado, and Lothrop gave a short laugh.

"Good night," he said, and went away in the darkness.

Carleton turned to Anne. Her face

was hidden against the rough back of the bench—the face that an hour ago had been so care-free. It was infamous that she should have been made unhappy in such a cause. So well did Carleton read her that he knew that all her life the lie would rise up and confront her; that, at night, she would wake and weep because of the stain on her whiteness; that out of her very tenderness had come her temptation.

And Lothrop did not understand!

The thought brought with it a sudden, intimate sense of possession. He leaned over Anne, and touched her hair gently with his strong fingers.

"Forget it all," he said, and, in the midst of her misery, there was borne in upon her the great revelation of a perfect love.

"It is you who forgive?" she breathed, incredulously. "You——?"

Carleton shook his head, a sudden smile illuminating his stern face.

"It is I who—understand," he said.



REALITY

IS this the love she dreamed of, that should rise
Like some great, unknown flame in midnight skies,
Alive, illumining, by whose vast light
Her soul might read the book of Life aright?

Is this the love she dreamed of, this poor thing
That wakes no fear, no joy, no wondering?
Failing her star, she needs must sit to-night
And turn a dreary page by candlelight.

Is this the love she dreamed of—for whose sake
Her heart with too much bliss or pain should break?
Nay, the gods jest when this their gift appears,
Too dull for laughter and too weak for tears.

MC CREA PICKERING.



LIFE'S LOVE

HE (*in the dark*)—Is that you, my love?
HIS WIFE—No, it is I.



IF we may not eat our cake and have it too, we may eat it and then have another cake.

UN SUJET DE PIÈCE

Par François Coppée

O N causait entre hommes, dans le fumoir, après dîner. Le juif Péreira, le directeur de théâtre si connu par ses faux-cols marmoreux et ses cravates triomphantes, posait devant la cheminée, tenant à la main un petit verre de curaçao.

— L'anecdote, disait-il, l'anecdote, tout est là. Une pièce n'est bonne que si on peut en raconter le sujet en cinq minutes... Quand un auteur vient me parler d'une comédie à l'heure de mon déjeuner, je l'arrête tout de suite:— M'aurez-vous dit votre affaire avant que j'aie fini cet œuf à la coque?... S'il ne peut pas, c'est que la pièce ne vaut rien!

Et Péreira goba son verre de curaçao.

— Je ne suis pas auteur dramatique, dit le grand Maurice, l'attaché d'ambassade, du fond du large fauteuil où il était enfoui; pourtant, si vous voulez, Péreira, je vous conterai une anecdote dont il me semble qu'un homme du métier tirerait parti... Mais le temps de manger un œuf, c'est bien court.

— Je vous accorde une omelette, répondit le juif avec un gros rire... Mais les idées de pièces des gens du monde... j'ai de la méfiance, comme dit le *guillotiné par persuasion*... Enfin, allez toujours.

— Eh bien! l'histoire a fait le tour des salons viennois, du temps où j'étais là-bas. Il y avait alors à Vienne un médecin très renommé pour les maladies du cœur; il s'appelait, — je change les noms, naturellement, car la chose est tragique, — il s'appelait le docteur Arnold. Agé de quarante ans à peine, il avait déjà une magnifique clientèle. C'était un bel homme, fort élégant, avec une figure régulière, à

grands favoris blonds, le type autrichien, enfin... mais une paire d'yeux à l'américaine, bleus et froids comme l'acier, qui donnait à réfléchir. Une famille russe résidant à Vienne — nommons-les, si vous voulez, les Skébéloff, — appela le docteur en consultation auprès de la fille de la maison, chez qui le spécialiste reconnu, au premier examen, un commencement d'anévrisme. Cela devait être fort troublant d'ausculter et de percuter Mlle Macha... Songez donc! Appliquer son oreille contre la poitrine d'une belle brune de dix-neuf ans et lui frapper sur le cœur, comme pour dire: Peut-on entrer?..

— Maurice, interrompit le maître de la maison, pas de plaisanteries de vaudeville... Vous nous avez promis un drame.

— Vous l'aurez, soyez tranquille... Bien que reçus dans la bonne compagnie, ces Skébéloff étaient un peu suspects. Ils vivaient à l'hôtel. Le père Skébéloff avait trop de ganses, d'olives et de brandebourgs sur ses pelisses fourrées. Ces gens-là menaient assez grand train, et les diamants de la maman passaient pour être faux... Avec cela, deux filles à caser, trop belles pour rien faire de bon... Enfin, du monde équivoque. Mais le docteur était pris de passion; il demanda Mlle Macha en mariage, fut admis à faire sa cour, épousa au bout de trois mois, et la famille Skébéloff, subitement dégoûtée de Vienne, s'envola vers de nouvelles tables d'hôtes. La femme du médecin, *frau doctorin*, comme on dit là-bas, plut beaucoup dans la société viennoise. Les nouveaux mariés étaient fort intéressants; le docteur

aimait à la fois Macha comme sa femme et comme sa malade; il l'adorait et il la soignait. Ce petit roman enchantait les Allemandes sentimentales. Déjà Mme Arnold, de qui la santé se rétablissait à vue d'œil, se montrait souvent dans le monde, y valsait même quelquefois...

— Malgré sa maladie de cœur?

— Oui. La jeune femme paraissait si bien guérie, que son mari lui permettait un tour de valse, comme médecin; mais je crois qu'il l'aurait volontiers défendu comme jaloux. Car le beau capitaine de Blazewitz—un Apollon en uniforme blanc—était toujours inscrit le premier sur le carnet de bal de Mme Arnold et la serrait fort tendrement contre ses aiguillettes. Une fois de plus, le vieux mythe de Mars et de Vénus se trouvait...

— Bon! dit Péreira. Voilà votre exposition faite, Maurice, vos bons-hommes posés... *Enchaînons* maintenant, comme on dit en argot de coulisses, *enchaînons!*

— Soit!... Un jour, le docteur découvre un paquet de lettres...

— Bien usé, le paquet de lettres!

— Péreira, vous êtes insupportable! Vous mettez ici la ficelle que vous voudrez; mais, dans mon anecdote, ce sont des lettres.

— Qui donnent au mari la certitude de son déshonneur. n'est-ce pas?

— Apparemment.

— Et qui lui font concevoir un projet de vengeance!...

— Vous connaissez donc l'histoire, Péreira? Alors, contez-la vous-même.

— Non, mon ami, mais je *déblaie*,— toujours pour nous servir de nos termes de métier,—je *déblaie*, voilà tout. Donc le mari se vengea...

— Par un de ces crimes qui restent toujours ignorés.

— Alors, comment l'a-t-on su?

— Parce que le docteur a parlé... Oui, le coupable lui-même, plus tard, cédant à cet irrésistible, à ce fatal besoin de confidence qui existe chez tous les hommes et qui fait de la confession des catholiques une des institutions les plus...

— Au fait, Maurice, au fait!

— Je ne dis plus un mot, grommela le jeune homme vexé.

— Ne vous fâchez donc pas, reprit ce gros insolent de Péreira; nous vous évitons la peine de finir vos phrases... C'est le vrai style du théâtre... Voyez Scribe, Sardou... Tout en dialogue, avec des points suspensifs... Je me tue à le répéter aux jeunes auteurs: Pas de style, surtout! Pas de littérature!... Il y a des pièces qui sont tombées pour un adjectif... On ne sait pas le mal que peut faire une métaphore... Ainsi, les romantiques...

— A votre tour, Péreira, fit le maître de la maison en regardant le juif d'un air goguenard à travers son monocle; quand vous aurez fini?...

— C'est juste... Maurice nous disait donc que le mari...

— ... Imagina une vengeance terrible mais seulement permise à un homme de sa profession. Macha n'était pas complètement guérie—il le savait bien, le spécialiste—de cette maladie du cœur pour laquelle il l'avait soignée, pendant deux ans, avec tant de zèle et d'amour. Il entreprit de la lui rendre. Contenant sa colère, il se borna à garder auprès de sa femme l'attitude d'un mari inquiet et soupçonneux, et fit naître ainsi la crainte et l'angoisse dans l'esprit de l'adultère. Il savait, par les lettres qu'il avait surprises, quelle passion insensée éprouvaient les deux amants; il était sûr qu'ils chercheraient toujours à se voir, même au milieu des dangers. Ce Machiavel domestique profita de cette situation. Depuis lors, une puissance mystérieuse mit toutes sortes de petits obstacles entre Macha et M. de Blazewitz, sans les séparer tout à fait cependant; elle faisait manquer leurs rendez-vous, interrompait leurs correspondances, troublait et empoisonnait leurs amours; et, dans cette vie pleine d'émotions vives et douloureuses, la santé de Mme Arnold s'altéra de nouveau très profondément. Le docteur tuait sa femme avec autant de certitude et de précision qu'il l'avait guérie naguère. À l'heure de folle terreur qui donne à la circulation une activité morbide, l'habile homme faisait succéder les longues journées de

tristesse, qui congestionnent le cœur et y retiennent le sang. Puis, soudain, il feignait de n'avoir plus aucune jalousie, se montrait touché jusqu'aux larmes des souffrances de sa femme. — "Mais que se passe-t-il donc, ma pauvre Macha? lui disait-il. Mon diagnostic n'y comprend plus rien. Vous avez tout l'air d'une personne qui mourrait de chagrin. N'êtes-vous pas heureuse avec moi?" Et, tout en observant avec une diabolique volupté les progrès du mal, il crucifiait sa victime de ses désespoirs hypocrites. Au bout de six mois les syncopes étaient plus fréquentes, les palpitations plus rapides; les symptômes les plus inquiétants de l'anévrisme avaient reparu... Ah! ah! Péreira, vous ne m'interrompez plus maintenant!

— Eh bien, oui..., c'est le second acte, le nœud de la pièce. Mais le dénouement... le dénouement!

— Le dénouement demandé! cria Maurice avec l'accent d'un garçon de restaurant qui apporte un plat, voilà!... Un soir, le docteur entre chez sa femme comme une tempête: — "Madame, je sais tout. M. de Blazewitz est votre amant." La pauvre Macha devint pâle comme un linge, et les violettes de la mort apparurent sur ses lèvres. — Tuez-moi! dit-elle. — C'était bien ce qu'il voulait.

— Je ne porterai pas la main sur une femme, reprit Arnold. Votre complice a payé pour deux. Je viens de me battre avec M. de Blazewitz... Je l'ai tué!" Et Macha tomba raide sur le tapis. Mais le docteur mentait; il n'eût pas osé toucher la moustache du beau capitaine, qui passait pour le premier tireur de Vienne. Il s'agenouilla près de sa femme étendue à terre, lui prit la main. Le poulx palpitait encore, elle vivait. Alors le bourreau lui donna des soins, la ranima: — "Vous allez mettre une robe de bal, tous vos diamants, ordonna-t-il, et m'accompagner au bal de l'ambassade de France, où nous sommes invités." — "Jamais... je ne pourrai jamais!" — "Vous allez vous habiller, et nous partons. J'ai pris, pour mon duel avec M. de Blazewitz, le prétexte d'une

querelle de jeu. Mais vous êtes compromise. Il faut qu'on vous voie, ce soir, à mon bras dans le monde. Sinon, l'on croirait que je me suis battu à cause de vous, et je serais deshonoré... Habillez-vous; je le veux!..." Il fallait bien que la malheureuse obéît. Comment résister à l'homme qu'elle avait si cruellement outragé? Elle fit sa toilette, quelle agonie! et son mari la traîna au bal de l'ambassade. Là, brisée, elle s'affaissa, plutôt qu'elle ne s'assit, dans le salon d'entrée, où l'huissier, à chaque minute, criait le nom des arrivants. Le docteur, en grande tenue, superbe, avec tous ses ordres, se tenait debout derrière le fauteuil de sa femme. Tout à coup, après un coup d'œil jeté dans l'antichambre, il se pencha à l'oreille de Macha, comme pour y glisser une galanterie. — "La douleur ne t'a donc pas tuée, misérable?" — "Pas encore, malheureusement," murmura la suppliciée. — "Eh bien, regarde alors, ajouta-t-il en lui montrant la porte, et meurs de joie!" En ce moment, l'huissier annonça d'une voix sonore: "Le capitaine baron de Blazewitz!" Le bel officier entra, le sourire aux lèvres, et tout d'abord, comme il faisait toujours, il chercha sa maîtresse du regard. Il la reconnut à peine. Elle venait de se lever de son siège, toute droite, comme mue par un ressort, livide sous ses parures, effrayante! Elle lui jeta un regard égaré, porta la main à sa gorge et retomba lourdement sur le parquet, morte, bien morte, cette fois!... Ce fut un affreux esclandre. Le docteur se jeta sur le corps de sa femme en poussant des cris, et le désespoir de M. de Blazewitz aurait fait scandale, si un ami ne l'eût entraîné! Tous les invités s'enfuirent; les laquais mangèrent le souper, et l'ambassadrice fut très mécontente, car elle avait fait fabriquer tout exprès pour le cotillon des têtes grotesques dont elle attendait un grand effet.

Maurice se tut; il y eut un moment de silence. On avait presque frissonné, et Péreira lui-même eut le tact de ne pas dire quelque lourde sottise.

Mais la maîtresse de la maison se

montra, soulevant la portière de tapisserie du fumoir.

— Eh bien, messieurs, avez vous fini vos cigares? Les dames vous réclament.

En passant au salon, Péreira prit le bras de Maurice.

— Et le docteur, qu'est-il devenu?

— Comme je vous l'ai dit, il s'est presque vanté, dans un jour d'imprudence, de son crime, qui échappe d'ail-

leurs à tout châtement. Mais le séjour de Vienne lui devenait difficile. Aujourd'hui, il est à Varsovie, où il fait beaucoup de clientèle, et où il continue à répéter aux malades de sa spécialité: — Pas d'émotions surtout, pas d'émotions!... Mais que pensez-vous de mon sujet de pièce?

— Impossible, mon cher. Tous les feuilletons diraient que c'est imité de la *Julie* d'Octave Feuillet.



THE VESTAL STAR

THE day has said good night, and gone to sleep;
Each drowsy bird lies dreaming in his nest.

A sweet, transparent light low in the West
Still lingers tenderly, as if to keep
A memory of the past alive. Stars creep
Timidly forth, and Venus with her crest
Of diamond-splendor hovers, loveliest,
As vestal-guardian of the violet deep.

The star of love reigns also in my heart.
Amid the somber shadows of its night
Pours the soft radiance of her holy light
As from a lamp hung in a shrine apart;
And thou, O Loveliness, its vestal art
To keep the flame forever pure and bright!

NATHAN HASKELL DOLE.



COMPARING NOTES

MRS. APOLLO—Your cook seems to have a very refined appearance.

MRS. BROOKS—She says she is a Vassar girl.

MRS. CUNNINGHAM—She worked for me once, and then said she was a Wellesley girl.

MRS. DEVINE—She told me she had been a cook at both colleges.



HOW can clergymen consistently decry gambling and perform the marriage ceremony?

ADAM AND EVE IN EVENING DRESS

By Fletcher Cowan

AND it came to pass that, when Adam and Eve were banished, they did light housekeeping in the forest. For several thousand years they were condemned to live with each other. This was the retribution meted them for their instrumentality in the Fall of Man.

As the eons rolled on, and wireless whispers of the modern world began to rise above the music of the locusts and the katydids, strange birds of passage were seen to flit across the heavens, and one day, one of the air-ships dropped the Sunday edition of an American newspaper.

Eve was reclining in her fiber-woven hammock as the paper fell. It was just after dinner. She and Adam were recuperating from a pecan salad. The manna-laden breezes were sweeping through the forest. Eve arose. She was attired in a bangle bracelet. She picked up the paper, opening it at the society page.

Just then, Adam awoke from his sun-bask, and, pulling himself vaguely together, took up several of the neoteric papyrus folds called "sections," and began to interest himself. It was a Christmas edition, printed six months in advance of date. It contained a full-page history of creation, enlivened by illustrations in multi-color. There was a rubricated rendering of Milton's "Morning Hymn in Paradise," and Adam saw that he and Eve were mentioned in it. He wondered who Milton was. He saw, besides, a reproduction of a picture by Gustave Doré, showing the expulsion of himself and lady from the Garden. He made up his mind at once that, if

possible, he must meet the artist and abbreviate the next French census report by one Gustave. He spoke feelingly to Eve about the picture, but she, absorbed excitedly in the fashion-page of the paper, could talk of nothing but the latest novelties in women's wearing apparel.

"Adam," she cried, "look at the gowns! After all, banyan leaves have their limitations."

Adam turned to the plain news sections. Quickly his hair grew pompadour.

"They must be terrible people!" he cried, rising and pacing about the clearing.

"They must be charming people!" exclaimed Eve, her mind aglow with visions of theatres and restaurants, fair women, and men susceptible to flattery.

"These people commit murder!" gasped Adam. "They beg, they borrow and they steal!"

"Charming! They abhor the conventions, as we did."

In the centre of the clearing, Adam suddenly stood still, gazing upon the face of his consort with a look of tragic significance.

"We have done this," he said, hoarsely. "'Tis our example, Eve, has brought these people to their present depths of shame."

"Do you think so?" cried Eve, with a woman's glory in her power, whether for good or ill. "Let us visit this strange world, and find if that be true."

"We dare not step beyond the confines of our exile," protested Adam.

"Does it follow," retorted the lady of the apple episode, "that, because

we were banished from Eden, we are ostracized from New York? Signal the next aerial car. Let us go forth from here and behold the evil we have wrought to man!"

II

AND it furthermore came to pass that the air-ship which descended to take Adam and Eve up out of their sylvan conserve to New York, was one that made a specialty of communication with inland and benighted regions.

It was, in fact, connected with an American three-ring circus enterprise, and, covering Asiatic territory, was ready to pick up any novelty that came along.

Unencumbered with the usual impedimenta, Adam and Eve stepped lightly into the car, and were entered in the air-ship's log as decided novelties. It did not occur to them that a trip to New York was a diversion for which ordinary people usually had to pay. Ignorant of modern customs, they took everything for granted, differing in this respect from the air-ship's captain, who at once marconigraphed the three-ring circus company at New York to bill them as top-liners for an appearance at Madison Square Garden.

When the air-ship shot up to resume its passage, Adam and Eve at once became the centre of attention, for the vessel, though engaged in the Oriental importation business, also carried passengers. Many of the passengers were provided with wind-rugs which they frantically endeavored to part with in order to make Adam and Eve more comfortable. They gave them clothes also, which Eve accepted as her natural right, and Adam, at first, as an impertinence; but before the trip was over he became accustomed to them—also to many other things.

There was a party of clergymen aboard, returning from antipodal missionary stations, and Adam was surprised to learn how little they really knew about him. While sitting apart in the smoking-room, making himself

sick with a cigarette in the endeavor to appear nonchalant amid his new surroundings, he listened to their Talmudic citations, learning, much to his astonishment, that he had been married to a woman called Lilith before he met Eve, and, furthermore, that after the subsidence of a certain freshet called the Deluge, he had met Eve again after their separation, on Mount Ararat—an appointment which the lady, strange to say, had kept on time.

Eve became an instant favorite, everybody thought she so resembled Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Some of the ladies aboard condescended to teach the primitive woman something concerning the mysteries of poker and bridge whist. A gentleman gallantly advanced Eve a gold-piece to begin with. After a while, Eve paid the gold-piece back, and soon was lending money to the other people. Adam looked on with stern reproof at the proceedings, though meanwhile studying the game. He felt, instinctively, that the whole thing was wrong, until Eve advanced him a little money to take part in the game himself. He won, and at once confessed that he had been guilty of misjudgment. Then, for the first time, did Adam begin to take on a serious leaning toward modern institutions. Never before had the moonlight seemed so beautiful to him as while strolling the deck of the air-ship in company with another man's wife. In this respect, Adam was far more richly endowed with the capacity for sensation than his consort, Eve. She, strolling with another woman's husband, found pleasure but no surprise, because in her the mischievous propensity was prehistorically inborn. So, while the air-ship bolted through the realms of space, Adam had a good time, while Eve was simply making other women miserable.

Then came the crash. It was on a foggy night. They were nearing New York. The search-light was out of order, and the surrounding atmosphere was impenetrable, obliterating the electric sky advertisements which

usually gave warning of the proximity of the great city. They met an airship going in the opposite direction, on the starboard tack. "*Après vous!*" piped the *Aeolus* to the *Etheria*. "*Après vous!*" responded the other, with Parisian deference. Then they struck, and through their beautiful suppression of personal preference in the matter, fell together, plumb, like shot birds.

Adam and Eve found themselves struggling in the water. Both felt that the money they had won at poker was bearing them down. They cried for help. The call was answered, and they knew they were in America when the captain of the tug-boat megaphoned as a preliminary, "What is it worth?" They were rescued, and Adam thought the fee extravagant until he struck the New York cabman who drove them to their hotel. Assigned to their room, they watched the bell-boy push on the electric light, and, when he departed, Adam was sufficiently interested in the mechanism to push the room into darkness again. But he was not long in discovering the combination, and, when he did, he disported himself like a maniac, working the connection off and on, dancing with sheer delight at the intermittent changes from light to gloom. Suddenly, he perceived a lettered dial on the wall, near the doorway. This was provided with a complicated mechanism. He pulled a switch about to a certain configuration of letters, and pushed a button, on general principles. Then he tottered back, and gasped: "Eve, I've ordered a *pousse-café*! I wonder what that is."

When the cordial came, they knew instinctively that it was something to drink, and went into ecstasies over its beauty, while awaiting the arrival of another one.

"Eve," remarked Adam, "do you remember, at Ararat, the grand chromatic arc that threw itself athwart the sky after the rain had ceased?"

"You mean the rainbow?"

"Yes. This is a liquid rainbow,"

said Adam, raising aloft his *pousse-café*. They drank them down and ordered more, until Adam began to feel like a kaleidoscope and Eve like a crazy-quilt. They then determined to go down to dinner, when the chilling thought struck Eve that they were not correctly attired. The society page in the Sunday newspaper and the random talk overheard on the airship had posted her thoroughly on fashionable customs.

"We have the money!" cried Adam, tapping his trousers-pocket with an air of plutocratic insolence. "We can buy the blooming clothes!"

Eve winced a little at the modernity of his language, and observed, crushingly, that the department-stores closed at six, while it was then seven. She suggested that Adam go down to the hotel-clerk and find out whether the laws of the dining-room were easy-going or arbitrary. Adam left the room, but the door he opened led him not to the corridor, as he expected, but to an adjoining room, which had not been locked off after the last time the two apartments had been let *en suite*. He gave an exclamation of surprise, and Eve followed him. In the room, a light was burning. Two trunks were open, one belonging to a woman, the other bearing unmistakable traces of the trail of man.

"I wonder where the people are," whispered Eve.

"Down at dinner, most likely," answered Adam. "Not going to anything particular to-night, either, for the togs of gladness are left behind." He held up an evening coat, and Eve, with telepathic sympathy, raised out of her own particular trunk a beautiful gown that bore on an inner band the name of a noted Parisian maker in letters of gold. It was a delicate creation, a thing to dream over or rave about, as woman's feeling listeth; but to Eve it was simply material which she needed, and she took it. In a similar way, the evening suit entangled itself with Adam's fancy. They returned to their own apartment

with the chattels, and were soon arrayed for dinner.

"Adam," said Eve, before the mirror, "go back and get my opera-cloak. How stupid of me to forget it!"

Adam did as directed, and came back not only with the cloak but barnacled with a pair of patent leathers for himself which he, also, had been stupid enough to forget.

They went down to dinner. Eve created an instant sensation as she swept into the grand dining-hall. A lady seated at one of the tables raised her *impertinente* as Eve passed, and gasped to the gentleman with whom she was dining:

"There goes a gown the exact duplicate of the one designed for me by Doucet, and guaranteed unreproducible!"

"I always said those French dress-makers were frauds," said the husband, oblivious of the fact that his chair had been brushed by the spike of his own evening suit.

When Adam and Eve sat down, they were at first perplexed in deciding what to order. Eve had gained a general idea from the woman's house-keeping page in the Sunday newspaper, but Adam found that the steady consumption of spectrum cordials had impaired his appetite. He took the *garçon* into his confidence, and asked him what to do about it.

"A cocktail or a sherry for an appetizer, sir."

"We've just had six *pousse-café*s," ventured Adam.

"The *pousse-café* comes generally at the end of the dinner, sir."

"Thank you," said Adam, running his eye up the menu. "That simplifies the matter, considerably. All we have to do is to reverse the dinner. Bring me a cigar and a *café noir*. Then you may serve the cheese, ice-cream and the salad. As we go along, we will order further."

So they ate their dinner backward, and, when they reached the soup, they were both commencing to feel hungry—so much so that they finished up, as far as food was concerned, with poached

eggs and shredded wheat. Then Eve took a *crème de menthe* and Adam a Scotch high-ball. By this time, Adam was feeling decidedly mellow and taking a more cheerful view of life than he had since the time he won his first money at poker on the air-ship.

"Eve," he said, between the puffs of the perfect-smoke, as he surveyed the magnificent assemblage of people in the dining-hall, "I seem to see things clearer now than I used to. How prosy I must have seemed to you, dearie, in the Garden, when I reproached you for bringing evil upon the race of man! If we come right down to the definition of the subject, what is evil, anyhow?"

"Evil is virtue made elastic and interesting," answered Eve, working at the mint straws.

"Precisely, and a necessary composite of man's nature. Look how these people are enjoying themselves. One way or another, depend upon it, they are feasting on forbidden fruit; living in lavish style beyond their prospective means; wasting money in frivolous abandonment, while the suppressed are starving. Treasurers of the modern trust companies are here, no doubt, on the brink of facing defalcation exposures on the morrow, but they are facing golden plover to-night. The champagne bubbles in the cup, and the toast is flashed across the table to the eyes of many a lady who has temporarily forgotten her marital identity. How much of the joy of living would have been lost to these people, Eve, if you had not plucked that apple!"

"Adam," said Eve, "that apple was never for a moment in doubt." She then began to gather her skirts together with that gentle, preliminary *frou-frou* which means, if a man can only understand it, that a woman's dinner is ended and a theatre proposition is in order.

"I notice," remarked Adam, "that some of the people here pay the waiter for their dinner, while some do not. How is that?"

Eve came to the rescue with her intuitive genius again.

"The place is managed as a combination of the American and European plans. We are stopping here on the American plan."

"Is that the better?"

"Yes, because you do not have to pay anything," said Eve. "The waiter brings you your check. You simply put down your room number and write your signature."

"How simply they run everything!" observed Adam; and, when the waiter brought the check, he treated it accordingly.

"Where are we going now?" asked Eve.

"To the circus," said Adam. "You saw our names upon the bill-boards to-day, as we came to the hotel. They have advertised our first appearance for to-night. It will be jolly to go and sit there and see, when it comes to our turn on the bill, how there will be no Adam and Eve." And Adam roared at the idea.

Eve observed, as they went out, that, while she was provided with an opera-cloak, Adam had no covering for his evening suit. Adam saw the point, and, as they passed the clothes-stand, he again in some mysterious way became inextricably mingled with an overcoat and a crush hat. He then ordered a coupé, and, as they were entering it, Eve dropped from under her opera-cloak a solid silver sugar-bowl and two small coffee spoons.

"What did you take those for?" asked Adam, as they were driven away.

"As souvenirs."

"But we are going to go back there."

"No. We shall try another hotel to-night."

"But I have not paid the bill there!"

"That is what we have left the hotel people to remember *us* by," said Eve. "Do you suppose I would take these souvenirs without leaving them some equivalent?"

They arrived at the circus, and, going through the menagerie, Adam saw many of the animals that he had been

instrumental in naming at the time of the creation.

Reaching their seats in the amphitheatre, he and Eve watched the three-ring performances with interest, but awaited with impatience the moment when the management would have to announce its regrets that, through some unforeseen turn of circumstances, the distinguished attractions billed as Adam and Eve would be unable to appear. At the proper programme number the master of ceremonies came duly out. Adam and Eve gave a start as they saw that he was followed by two odd-looking creatures in fleshings, garlanded with vine-leaves. They heard the new-comers announced as themselves and the audience assured that they were the real people.

"This is an outrageous fraud!" cried Adam, indignantly. The false Eve wore peroxide hair, and Adam looked like a ward politician who had lost his clothes on an election bet. The audience applauded them to the echo.

"Excuse me, sir," said a voice, as the applause subsided, and Adam felt his arm touched by a gentleman in the adjoining box, "do you know for a fact that this feature of the programme is a fraud?"

"I do."

"But how could the management dare to perpetrate such a hoax? It requires a nerve and capacity for deceit that is simply appalling."

"It is that nerve and capacity that have made the world what it is to-day," answered Adam. "It has been handed down to you and every one as a heritage from the earliest times."

"From whom?"

"From me."

"Then you are—?" gasped the gentleman.

"I am!" replied Adam, sententiously, and he and Eve, rising, left the circus.

As they departed, the gentleman leaned toward the lady who accompanied him, and said:

"Of all the men that ever were on

earth, that is the man I've been suffering most to know!"

"Why?" queried the wife.

To which the husband replied, obliquely:

"Something tells me that we shall meet again."

And the band struck up the tucket for the hippodrome.

III

AND it furthermore came to pass that, when Adam and Eve made their departure from Madison Square Garden, they found that the night was rainy, and, yielding to the modern affectation for artificial shelter, they went to another hotel—the most luxurious in the city. But, when they awoke in the morning, a new problem confronted them. They could not go down to breakfast because they were in evening dress. They, therefore, had breakfast sent up to them. Still, they could not move from their rooms, for lack of morning attire. Adam, of course, was in quasi-mufti because of his overcoat, but Eve, in a low-necked gown and a miniver opera-cloak, felt like a peacock in sparrow-land.

"We can't remain indoors all day," growled Adam. "We came to see New York."

"We shall see it, never fear," said Eve. "Just give me time to think. We have money left, it is true; but as we are not posted on the cab tariffs, and do not know how far we can lower the limit of a New York restaurant waiter with respect to his *douceur*, we must guard our resources."

Eve was satisfied that the heroic expenses would be easy. The incidentals would be the hard things. You can purchase a palace on a promise to pay, but you must hand up your fare on a traction car the minute the conductor comes around. This was the essence of Eve's line of thought without the particularity of the instance. Suddenly, she had an inspiration. She remembered noticing, as they had entered the hotel, a dressmaker's shop

on the first floor, connected with other bazaar attributes of the establishment.

"Adam," quoth she, "cover thine unseasonable attire with thine overcoat, and tell the dressmaker to come to my room at once. Then wilt thou proceed to the street corner, and without the florist's shop await my coming."

Adam did as directed, and for one mortal hour did he enrich his botanical knowledge in front of the florist's window before Eve arrived. When she appeared, she was attired in a striking street costume which the *modiste* had left her to try on for alterations.

Just then there happened along a great coach, drawn by six horses, filled with people, and moving to the music of a hundred campaniles, strung as harness-pendants. It bore upon its side, in golden blazonry, the legend, "Seeing New York." And Adam and Eve got in, adding themselves to the crush of the wide-eyed and interested. And they saw New York. And, behold, it pleased them very much—the parks; the magnificent houses of the rich; the historical points of interest; and the public institutions built for the amelioration of the countless infirmities visited upon the human race.

And things went well until meridian time, when the coach pulled up at a hotel on the suburbs of the city, near Van Courtlandt Manor, where the attendant called out a thirty-minutes' swing for refreshment. And, behold, Adam was wroth; for he could not go in to dinner without removing his overcoat, and he could not remove his overcoat without revealing his evening dress. But Eve counseled him concerning the art of patience in appetite, and told him to remain without, while she went in. And, when she came out, she assuaged him by telling him what an excellent dinner she had had. And Adam was glad:

And when the day was ended, they did not go back to the same hotel, for Eve had discovered that the costume she wore required no further alterations. So they betook themselves to

another of the fashionable hotels. And there Eve suddenly discovered that she must remain in her room, because she had no evening dress, while Adam, seasonably attired for anything after twilight, went down and took unto himself a dinner of many courses. And Adam returned to Eve and told her of it. And she was glad, or affected to be so.

And Adam told Eve that he had made up his mind to go to the opera that evening to see the "Faust" of Gounod in order to observe how modern art could hit off the local color of temptation. And Eve could not go, because she was in walking costume and finically particular. And Adam went in evening dress, and saw Édouard de Reszké for the first time as Mephistopheles, and Jean as Faust, and Melba as the jewel-baited Marguerite, and he applauded them, and came back and told Eve of the glorious study of sin which he had seen; and Eve was glad, and, dropping a book of Marie Corelli's which she had been reading, she again observed to Adam that the apple had never for a moment been in doubt. And Adam agreed with her. And Adam said to Eve, "It makes me feel proud to see what has resulted from our initiative. I have been to-night in the presence of a work of art, which never would have existed if it had not been for the genius of our original mistake."

And, on the morning of the third day, they arose, and Eve, who was in walking costume, had again the right of way over Adam, who was still in evening dress. And the day became suddenly hot, and Adam saw that he must immediately devise means for the shedding of his overcoat, else be mistaken for a victim of tuberculosis. So he hied him to a barber shop, where he removed his claw-hammer and his overcoat at the same time, and subsided into a chair and was shaved. And, when he arose from the shave, he took unto himself from a clothes nail contiguous to his own a stately Prince Albert, and sauntered forth a different butterfly, leaving his cocoon behind

him. And when he got back to the hotel, he found that Eve had just returned from one of the department-stores, with a new hat.

"How did you get it?" gasped Adam, admiring, withal, her genius for acquisition.

"I had no money; they wouldn't open an account with me; and rather than subject myself to the indignity of a discussion over the matter, I—well, here is the hat. Do you like it, baby?"

"Hush!" said Adam, suddenly, grasping her arm, with a start.

"What is it?" cried Eve, clinging to him with alarm.

"Turn your head slowly, very slowly, up toward the transom."

Eve did so, and saw the faces of two men, peering into the room through the transom glass.

"What does it mean?" she gasped.

"Hush! They are nothing but detectives. Do not betray yourself. Now turn your head slowly toward the window."

Eve did so, and again saw two faces without.

"We are surrounded!" she cried.

"Flight by the fire-escape is cut off," said Adam, "but we are not surrounded. They are the same two men, merely gone around to make sure that they were looking into the right room. They are Sherlock Holmeses, beating on our track. The hotel people that we have honored fugitively with our presence, have evidently commenced to make up their accounts. The main thing is to have as little incriminating evidence about ourselves as possible. That sugar-bowl—those coffee spoons—?"

"I forgot them at the circus."

"Good!" said Adam, gauging the situation with the coolness of a master. "Give me that new hat. The style must be modified as quickly as possible to throw the sleuths off the scent."

He threw the hat on the floor, and jumped on it.

"Put it on," he said to Eve. "They will never recognize it. The grapes are now raisins, and the hat is more becoming to you. Come with me, and

fear not. These Sherlocks are always on the trail, but they are never summary in their actions, so long as you give them new clues to work upon. We shall now give them a master riddle. They have their theories pat. We are going to leave these quarters, as they expect us to, and they are going to round us up, as they think, in some place where thieves are wont to congregate. Come; we shall fool them."

They left the hotel, the detectives following them. At any moment they could have been arrested. But the clues were not complete. The detectives were certain that the fugitives were the people they wanted, but not certain about anything else.

"Is it not strange," observed Adam, casting a cautious look behind him as they hurried through Forty-fourth street, "that one cannot make a study of social institutions without such an annoyance? We shall queer them, now. Look back."

He led the way suddenly into a playhouse, given over for a time to the Independent movement, where he purchased seats for Ibsen's "Ghosts."

"Have they entered after us?" he asked of Eve, as he gave the tickets to the doorkeeper.

"No," answered Eve. "One of them has reeled against the canopy-frame outside, as though attacked by vertigo, and I think the other has dropped dead."

"Did they say anything?"

"The last words of the one who dropped dead were, 'Well, I'll be——!'"

"Hush!" said Adam. "The play is on." And they entered the darkened auditorium.

IV

"Ghosts" impressed Adam profoundly; the more so, perhaps, because it aroused his jealousy. He saw at a glance that Ibsen had brought forth a magnificent tree from the seed which he, personally, had sown. The real inventor of sin had been eclipsed, as has happened in so many other in-

stances, by the bravura of a piratical manipulator.

When the curtain fell on the first act, Adam said to Eve:

"Here, again, if it had not been for us this play would never have been written. By the way, what does this man in front of us mean by snoring?" And he pointed to a character, gathered in a sleepy pose, whose nasal reverberations suggested the oboe-work in a Beethoven symphony. "If he keeps it up," fumed Adam, "I shall speak to him through the next act, and incidentally remind his lady that she must remove her hat."

"Does it matter particularly?" yawned Eve. "Take me away from here as soon as possible. I love evil, Addie, for its own sake, but I don't like it hurled at me in chunks. This thing is so horribly realistic! It is simply distressing. The people around us are saying that it possesses such finality—that it is so cosmic—so full of mother-earth symbolism. What do they mean by these expressions?"

Just then the curtain rose again, and, leaning forward, Adam said, but not to Eve: "Excuse me, lady, would you kindly remove your hat? I paid my price at the door of the clinic to see this operation, and I want my equivalent. Thank you."

The play went on, and, as the action was reaching one of its most intense and inexorable points, the music from the gentleman in front took on a richness of volume that threatened to dominate the text.

"Excuse me, lady," whispered Adam again, "but would you kindly jab one of your hat-pins into the orchestra beside you? He is interfering with the before-mentioned equivalent."

"With pleasure," said the lady, much to Adam's surprise; and she harpooned the gentleman with *two* hat-pins.

"What the devil—!" cried the orchestra, leaping to its feet.

"Hus-s-s-h!" hissed everybody, and the wife pulled her husband down again by the coat-tails.

"I have been used to this for twenty

years," she said to him, "but others haven't." And the play went on.

As the final curtain went down, and the singularly unobtrusive audience began to file out, scarce daring to speak after the tension it had been put to, the gentleman—he of the pipes-of-Pan—turned and glared at Adam. Immediately, he fell back with a cry of astonishment, and Adam saw that he was the same individual that had spoken to him in the box at the circus.

"You!" gasped the gentleman.

"I," said Adam, simply.

"Let me grasp your hand, sir. I have been thinking of you ever since our last meeting. I have been wanting to see you, so that I might talk with you upon a very vital matter. Allow me to present my card."

At that moment, Eve pinched Adam's arm, whispering:

"The detectives are just behind us!"

"Fear not," said Adam, as they gained the street. "We are in absolutely no danger until they attempt to arrest us."

The two detectives took up the trail again.

"Shade of Conan Doyle!" muttered one of them. "If I were only sure that the woman was wearing the same hat!"

"If I were only certain that the hotel we followed them from was the last hotel they stopped at!" mused the other. "Shade of Hornung, I cannot be mistaken."

"Foiled!" said the first speaker.

"Never mind," said the second, "our turn will come!"

Adam looked at the card. It read:

H. BARLEY MALTUS

Proprietor of the Colonial Blend Distillery
Manufacturer of All the Whiskey
that's Fit to Drink

With a scent of pleasurable possibilities, Adam expressed himself delighted to meet the gentleman. The ladies were introduced, and Mr. Maltus, assuming the position of host of the evening, took the party to a restaurant. Over the reed-birds and the fluid concomitants, he said to Adam, while

Mrs. Maltus talked point-duchesse and children's croup to Eve:

"Do you know, sir, in the mercantile field of to-day, we have a way, when we are called upon to make new affiliations, of consulting authorities which give the rating of the people in question. For instance, if, to-night, you had ordered a case of five-year-old 'Three Star Miles Standish' from me I should have promptly looked you up in Bradstreet. But, as it has happened, I meet you upon a plane of accident, devoid entirely of personal motive, as I have met you once before. You told me then that you were Adam, and I believed you, as I believe you now," said H. Barley Maltus, grasping Adam's hand with warm ferocity. "You are the real thing, Adam, from the Garden Edenia, and I know it, and I'm glad to meet you!"

"Why?" asked Adam, with primitive brevity.

"I'll tell you. I'm a whiskey distiller—one of the wealthiest men in America—but I'm unhappy."

"Why?" persisted the Edenist.

"Because I feel I have got rich too easily upon the genius of another man."

"Whose genius?"

"Yours."

"Explain."

"You, and your radiant lady seated on my right, have been the making of every great fortune that exists to-day, mine included."

"How have these great fortunes been accumulated?"

"Simply through living up, as you remarked before, unto the heritage you left us; simply through understanding the business of doing that which is forbidden, which, now, through the modifications of time and circumstance, has come to be recognized as simply the art of doing people. Your first principles are greater than Herbert Spencer's. Spencer appeals to the mind, you to the blood—the bell-button of the life of man. Speaking only of my personal affairs, I can assure you that you are the very rock-bottom of the whiskey trade—the mainspring of the whole business. If

it hadn't been for you, we shouldn't be selling the goods to-day."

"Am I not entitled to some commissions, then?" queried Adam, after a moment's reflection.

Mr. Maltus smiled at this, and said: "You have the salesman's instinct, I see. I suppose even that was born in the Garden. But you shall not wait for commissions in order to have recognition from me. First, tell me—have you ever heard of such a thing as the conscience-fund?"

"No," replied Adam. "I had a conscience once, but my wife discouraged it."

"Well, a conscience-fund is an amount of money set apart by a man for the public good, in expiation of his acquirement of a fortune through questionable practices. For some time, I have held such a fund in sequestration. It is usually forwarded to the National Treasury, anonymously, but I have not parted with mine yet, feeling every day I might be able, perhaps, to live the uneasiness of my conscience down, and thereby avoid the risk of exposing the fund to the care of alien hands. I see, now, that the fund has but one destination. It must go to you."

"Thank you," said Adam.

"It belongs to you by right; and let me tell you, sir, there is money behind it, coming from other men. My offering will be a mite, compared to the reparation that will be meted you by others. You may not believe it, Mr. Adam, but all we manufacturers of the things that appeal to the baser appetites of human nature are, at heart, a band of conscience-stricken men. We know we have made our fortunes by trading on the inherent weaknesses of human nature, and sometimes, after business hours, we have met and cried over our mutual degradation, and wondered how we could ever justify ourselves."

"Don't let that worry you," said Adam. "If you will introduce me to a few of your suffering friends, I shall ease their minds at once, and share with them the taint of their possessions."

"You shall meet these friends, and at my home. There is to be a card-party at the house to-night, and—dear," ventured Mr. Maltus to his wife, "I think our friends would like to meet the people, don't you?"

"I'm sure. Let's go!" said Mrs. Maltus to Eve. "I want you to meet my son, Reginald. He's the pride of my heart, and breaks it every day."

As they left the restaurant, Mr. Maltus suggested a carriage, but Adam and Eve had not yet ridden in a trolley-car, and the party took one.

"You see," observed Mr. Maltus, pointing out the car advertisements to Adam when they were seated, "you find yourself confronted on every hand by the fruits of your antediluvian work. Run your eye along that line of bold-lettered panels. You see advertisements of club-cocktails, cordials, champagnes, each mated with its sister antidote in the shape of a bromo-seltzer or a compound of caffeine. Notice the morphine cures and the celery compounds with countless nostrums for the alleviation of gout, rheumatics and all the other diseases resultant from the desire to see life from a large and roseate standpoint at unseasonable hours and with too unremittent vigor. Even the health foods, 'Nerve' and 'Snap' and 'Go' and 'Git,' are all indirect tributes to yourself, as they supply the demand for recuperatives from these evils. You ought to receive conscience commissions on all these things. Excuse me—here's our street."

Adam and Eve found the Maltus household a dream of artistic beauty.

"This is the art gallery," said Mr. Maltus, entering a semi-dark chamber from the hall. He touched an electric button, and in an instant the walls were vibrant with color and the gleam of gold.

"We don't in the least know whether these pictures are good or bad, but they were guaranteed to be *Art*. I have the guarantee in my safe. Here again, you may see how your original stimulus has really been the making of what we call high art. Painters,

like Bouguereau and Carolus Duran, are directly indebted to you for every cent they have made from the painting of the nude, because you were the inventor of that style of dress."

"Wrong, sir," excepted Adam. "We did not invent nudity. We discovered the accessory that made the world aware of it."

"Then," cried Mr. Maltus, not a whit upset by Adam's rejoinder, "the whole clothing-trade ought to be paying you commissions!"

"Now you're shouting," said Adam, feeling more at home, and becoming very certain of a future income.

Mr. Maltus took them into the drawing-room where the card-party had already begun to assemble.

"Where is Reginald?" asked Mrs. Maltus, looking about for the pride of her heart.

"Reginald!" called Mr. Maltus, and, in a moment, a tall, well-developed, ultra-up-to-date youth emerged from the dining-room, in evening dress, with a serviette in one hand, a wine-glass in the other and a smile upon his face illustrative of temporary and artificial beatitude. Adam observed that he bore a remarkable resemblance to Oswald, in "Ghosts."

"Reginald keeps very much to himself in the dining-room," explained Mr. Maltus. "He has a scientific bent, and likes to analyze the goods we make in our business. He studied to be a doctor, you know, but gave that up to make medical certificates testifying to the purity of our stock. He uses no instruments in his experiments but himself, so that we can depend entirely upon the truth of his report. Isn't that jag a beauty? That's a mixture of one pint of 'Three Star Miles Standish' to two of 'Halcyon Days Sour Mash.' He will shortly melt into that just a *soupeon* of our American Champagne, and then he will come in again with a written affidavit that he feels like the darling of the gods. You ought to feel proud of him, Adam, really. I consider Reginald one of the finest bits of work that may be traced back to your influence."

"I am glad you feel so," said Adam, surveying Reginald with satisfaction. "It is a pleasure for me to feel that I have been even distantly instrumental in his evolution."

"I keep Reggie supplied with all the money he wants and every necessary for completing a downward career—including an automobile."

"I have one of the finest autos in the country," said Reggie, talking to Eve. "It moves so picturesquely; with such delightful abandon, don't you know. Last week, I shot over the Hudson River palisades with it and landed in the Haverstraw brick-yards. The next day I bolted into the palm room of the Waldorf, and, only an hour later, whizzed up six flights of stairs in a West Side tenement, was wafted out through a window and found myself resublimated on the sidewalk. Capricious, like a woman, don't you know, and similarly diverting. Will you join me in a glass of wine?"

Reggie escorted Eve into the dining-room, already fascinated by her charms.

"Now," said Mr. Maltus, to Adam, "I shall introduce you to a few people, and then we shall sit down at cards for a while. Do you see that big man talking to the lady in cardinal near the piano? That is the power of the great tobacco trust. He is the manufacturer of all the millions of paper cigarettes that have proved so efficacious in the stunting of innocent childhood. He is killing thousands of children every year, and feels the pricks of conscience worse than I do. He will settle a fortune on you."

Suddenly, the cry of a woman's voice was heard from the dining-room, saying:

"Reginald! take care! Are you mad? Let me go!"

The attention of every one was directed toward the half-open door of the dining-room. Adam looked, and saw Eve struggling, apparently, to evade the caresses of Reginald, the witchery of her smile, however, inviting him on, even while her physical effort fought him off.

"Ghosts!" gasped Adam, clutching H. Barley Maltus by the hand and pointing inward, "ghosts!"

"More realistic than the play, though," smiled Mr. Maltus.

"Too much so for me!" cried Adam, sternly. "Let me pass, and I'll make mince-meat of him!"

"I am surprised at the puritanical attitude you assume," expostulated Mr. Maltus. "I thought you were in favor of free-lance attachments. In the art gallery, you admired the picture of Rousseau and Madame de Warrens, irrespective of its artistic merits. You stultify yourself, sir."

"This case is different," thundered Adam, "very different, because it concerns ME! I admire this sort of thing in the abstract, sir; only in the abstract; because that woman is my property!"

"Please, sir," pleaded Mrs. Maltus, "don't make a scene, now, for my sake!" And she looked him softly in the eyes, with the tenderest expression that he had ever seen radiate from the face of woman.

"Very well," snapped Adam. "I suppose I must be a gentleman."

"You can have it out with her later on, when you retire," suggested Mrs. Maltus, in a velvet voice.

V

AND, later on, Adam and Eve were shown to their room in the Maltus mansion and Adam had it out with Eve. And Eve was glad, her face growing radiant at the power of his three-ply invective.

"Oh, but you are a jewel of a husband!" she cried, flinging herself about his neck. "You throw in just the necessary obstacles to make a love-affair interesting. How you know a woman's heart!"

And, in the morning, Adam was first up, and he went down into the billiard-room to toy with cushion caroms. And Mrs. Maltus came in, and he was glad to meet her for the sake of the soothing expression she had given him in his

moment of sore tribulation the evening before. And he thought, as she approached him, "Here is a woman who is the very saint of household integrity, and Eve must be persuaded to be like her." And, behold, Mrs. Maltus came up to him with a soft "Good morning," and put her arms around him, as though she had been used to it all her life! And Adam was thunder-struck, and said: "Why is this?" And she answered him, "Adam, can't you guess—I love you!" And Adam exclaimed: "The devil you do! What sort of a place is this new-fangled world, anyhow!"

"I loved you, dear, the second time I saw you, at the Ibsen play. I was a Boston girl, originally. When I married my present husband, he was studying for the ministry. He took to the distillery business afterward, and I to Ibsen. I adore Ibsen. I could love him, too, but he lives so far away. I loved you because you kept awake through the Ibsen play, while my husband slept. I loved you for your strength—your mastery, when you commanded me to remove my hat at the theatre and to jab my husband with the hat-pin, even as Jael smote the sleeping Sisera. Dearest, I love you!"

Just then, Mr. Maltus entered. He smiled and immediately withdrew, saying:

"That's right, Adam. Make yourself at home."

And Mrs. Maltus said, looking after her husband:

"Isn't he splendid! Only a distiller, but the soul of hospitality."

And, after breakfast, Adam went to Eve, full of fulminate, and with an ultimatum.

"We shall leave this house—these people—to-day—forever!"

"Just as we are beginning to enjoy ourselves?" asked Eve. "Reginald wants me to see his yacht, and go with him in his automobile to the races. He has promised to show me the pace that kills."

"Excuse me," stormed Adam, "but I shall do all the pacing in this combina-

tion. That sort of work is not for the woman. It is the man's responsibility, and I am the last man in the world to try to evade the burden. Meanwhile, Mr. Maltus has promised to let me have, within an hour, his certified cheque for twenty-five thousand dollars. He might have made the amount larger, but he has a patent shrinkable conscience, it seems. The pittance, however, will keep us going for a few days, until I can establish a temporary receiving vault for what is to come in from the other people. Finally, when I have drawn in all I can from these conscience-commissions, I shall leave the further care of my interests in the hands of Mr. Morgan, and we shall aërate for home."

"For home?" faltered Eve. "What good will the money do us there?"

"I shall put up a row of apartment-houses in the forest."

"For what? There are no humans there requiring shelter."

"No, but there are animals. The people here, I notice, are considerate enough to shelter their dogs and cats and canary-birds. They also keep their flowers under glass. I don't purpose to have either the fauna or flora of our country exposed to the sun or rain any longer. Besides, if I can open up a railroad between there and anywhere else, I may be able to start a real-estate boom, and induce people to come and settle with us. I haven't been in this country for the last three days for nothing, you will notice."

So Adam took Eve away, and they rented a flat in Harlem. And, one evening, returning home after a very successful day's work in collecting conscience-commissions, among which was a ten-per-cent. block of the receipts from the Brighton Beach race-track, he found a letter from Eve, which read:

DEAREST: Have gone with Reggie to study the pace. Don't wait for me. Go back to the forest and build, and perhaps I may return some day and tell you how you should have arranged the closet-room.

YOUR LITTLE EVA.

"Just the way!" lamented Adam, in a broken voice. "A man gets started

in a nice, tidy little paying business, and woman's frailty bears him down. How shall I ever recover from the blow? I'll go to a vaudeville show." And go he did, and drowned his sorrow with a seat in the front row.

At the intermission, he went down to the café further to submerge his personality. As he sat in the room faceted with many mirrors, sipping a pousse-café in memory of departed joys, he saw the reflection of a face and, wheeling about, he cried:

"What are you doing here?"

It was not Eve's. It was the face of the Shade of Hornung.

"Where is your partner?" demanded Adam.

The detective shrugged his shoulders with a non-committal smile, which gave Adam an inspiration.

"You are following me?"

"Yes."

"Your partner is shadowing my wife?"

"Yes."

"I want to find her, myself. She left me to-day."

"Come," said the Shade of Hornung; and he led the way up-stairs.

"By the way," interrupted Adam, pausing in the corridor with the air of a man who knows he is soon to be in the presence of trouble, and yet affects to be cool, "you and your partner have been following us for some time?"

"Yes."

"Excuse me, but can't you detectives talk more than one word at a time? Your monosyllables annoy me."

"The novelists make us talk this way, sir. It is the monosyllable that gives us our general air of impenetrability and keenness."

"I thought it was the mission of the novel to follow life?"

"No, sir. It is the mission of life to follow the novel, now."

"Fudge!" said Adam. "Tell me—if you have been following us so long, why don't you arrest us?"

"Hush!" said the detective, pointing down the mezzanine corridor to the open door of one of the boxes. Beside it stood the grim figure of the

Shade of Conan Doyle, silent and motionless.

Adam did not need the detective's further explanation that Eve was in that box, for, at the same moment, he heard her voice raised in a high key, followed by a sharp clattering sound as of the sudden fall of a Venetian blind, or the continuous beat of a lady's fan against a human face. With that, Eve swept out of the box, and fell into Adam's arms.

"Take me home!" she cried. "I put on my best gown for him, and he's never noticed it!"

And Adam forgave her, and took her home, and promised her everything her dear little heart could sigh for, if she would only be good and live in the Harlem flat, a permanent thing, like the rest of the bric-à-brac. And he opened an account for her in a bank, and he gave her a cheque-book, and told her to open accounts with the various department-stores, so that she might smother herself in finery and similarly bedeck the interior of their happy home. And Eve was glad, and forthwith started in to live her Augustan hour of splendor. And she soon began to array herself in fabrics of the most delicate colors and textures, representing the most sumptuous output of the Orient. She had a necklace for every hour of the day; the jewels in her hair were as the sands of the sea; and so many pairs of lavishly embroidered slippers did she gather about her that one might have thought the flat the housing of a beautiful centipede. And in this regalia, reclining against the down of seventeen sofa-cushions in the vari-colored light of twenty piano-lamps, she reigned the Cleopatric It of that particular Harlem flat.

Thus Adam found her one evening, smoking a cigarette and reading a novel of Ouida as he entered.

"What is the matter, dear?" asked Eve of Adam. She noticed that he had brought home with him a very perturbed manner.

"I don't understand it," muttered Adam, pacing through the flat, rest-

lessly, stopping invariably, however, as he reached the windows.

"Don't understand what?"

"Well—never mind. What a beautiful home we have, Eve," he said, pausing and looking about, with an endeavor to appear at ease. "It would be a pity to have to part with it."

"Part with it? What do you mean?"

"Nothing. It must have cost you a lot of money to furnish it."

"Not much."

"Not much? Show me the cheque-book I gave you, so that I may see what balance you have left. I'll wager you haven't a penny."

She pointed to a drawer in the writing-table.

"You paid for all the big things, originally, you know," she said, in a manner peculiarly explanatory.

"Yes, but the ornaments—all these sumptuous small things, your beautiful personal adornments, and everything that makes the flat the symphony that it is—these must have cost considerable by themselves," said Adam.

He opened the cheque-book, and gave a gasp.

"You haven't spent a cent!" he cried.

"No," answered Eve, rising and facing him, calmly. "Of what use is money to me? To have spent the trash would have deprived me of my principal pleasure in making the collection."

"You—you don't mean—! Eve, you'd rather steal than eat! This is the reason, then, that the halls and the doorway below are picketed with strange men!"

"What! do they suspect?" screamed Eve, and she turned, instinctively, toward an avenue of escape.

Too late! At every doorway stood a sentinel, grim and silent. At every window was a face. Out of the cupboards they stepped, speechless as marionettes, and every hood of the twenty piano-lamps proved but a sleuth's disguise. Out on the fire-escape they had been dwelling in a tent for weeks, quite unnoticed. Eve

rushed to Adam's arms, meanwhile appealing to the Nemesian phalanx: "Please, sirs, let me go this time, and I'll never do it again!"

"Gentlemen," said Adam, facing the enemy, "who is the centurion of this host? I would speak with him."

The panel of the imitation Chippendale clock was slid aside, and the Shade of Hornung stepped forth. The apostate Raffles was faultlessly clad in a deep-skirted frock-coat, and in the heart of his ascot glistened a jewel of fully one hundred dark-lantern power, which Eve fell in love with at once.

As Adam saw him transformed from his humble garb of the sidewalk lounge into the deeper disguise of respectability, he demanded again of him:

"How is it you have not arrested us before? Why have you kept us waiting?"

"For two reasons, sir. In the first place, in deference to the demands of the novelists, we must do nothing to precipitate the conclusion of a dramatic episode prematurely. The action must be cumulative until, like the eke-point of the violin-string, the tension is ready to break. Then we step in. We lie awake all night and shadow you, when we might get rid of all the work at once. Why? This is the sacrifice we make for art."

"The other reason?"

"A personal one; it does not pay us to arrest you until we know that you are rich enough to offset the hold-up with a bribe sufficient to stand us off."

"I am a poor man," said Adam, hastily.

"We can wait, then," said the detective, obligingly, putting a silver whistle to his lips to signal the retirement of his men.

"Hold!" cried Adam. "It shall not be bruited abroad that I have deceived you. Know, then, that I am rich, and fully able to concede to your low demands, but I refuse! This city needs reform, and, as I see that I can keep myself the richer by reforming it, I so decide!"

The whistle sounded shrilly through the flat.

"Close in!" cried the frock-coat detective to his men; and the piano-lamps moved forward to the attack.

Not a bit upset was Adam. Ready as knight of old to defend the lady of his regard, no matter what the issue, he tore down from the walls a panoply of armor, and, seizing a sword of Toledo papier-mâché, he struck a Stanley Weyman attitude, and bade the hounds come on.

But cleverer was the ruse of Eve. Without a word, she whipped off the piano-cover as she might have flung out a streamer in token of exultation at a tournament, and, presto, in its swirl the lights of the twenty piano-lamps went out with the collapse of fainted fireflies, the enemy, in the darkness, spilling itself inextricably on the carpet, while Adam and Eve made their way out into the lighted hall, and reached the main stairway.

When they got down to the door and stepped into the hansom that had brought the frock-coat detective thither, Eve fainted in her consort's arms, but not before she gave vent to the triumphal shriek:

"It's all right, Adam—I've got his scarf-pin!"

VI

AND it came on to rain in the forest. And the sun-shower awakened Adam and Eve from their siesta. And they saw the American newspaper, which they had been reading, lying about them in many sections. And it reminded them.

And Adam said to Eve:

"What did *you* dream?"

And Eve said:

"I was in a department-store where they had rules and regulations that were perfectly absurd."

Adam yawned, and sighed.

"I dreamt that the authors of 'Zaza' and 'The Second Mrs. Tanqueray' were paying us royalties."

THE ACCOLADE

LOSS lies behind me now, and light before.
 Behind me, palsied hopes and nerveless aims,
 The cobweb falsehoods spun across Truth's door,
 The coward hesitance, the petty claims,
 Desires ignoble and ignoble shames.

Lead, and I follow, since I see thy face;
 Speak, and I go, to risk or want or strife;
 I know no hardship now in time or space,
 No darkness now with shapes of terror rife.
 Self lies behind me, and before me—life.

Hell shall not bar my sword from victory
 Now that thine eyes confess thy need of me.

MABEL EARLE.



THE BORES AND BORED

“HUM-M-M,” said the bumblebee, solemnly, as he alighted on the window-sill.

“Do go away and don't bother me,” implored the bluebottle, petulantly, bumping and butting into the window like mad. “Can't you see for yourself this is my buzzy day?”

“Hum-m-m,” observed the bumblebee, buttonholing the ant.

“Can't stop to gossip now,” panted the ant, breathlessly, as he dodged and hurried away. “I'm too busy getting ready to make a fool out of the grasshopper next Winter.”

“Hum-m-m,” droned the bumblebee, portentously, settling down beside the grasshopper.

“Sorry, old chap. See you later. Got an engagement for a picnic to-day. Ta, ta,” excused the grasshopper, blithely, springing hastily away.

“Hum-m-m,” fumed the bumblebee, sagely, ineffectually trying to stop the wicked flea.

“Swarm by yourself, you old mossback,” growled the wicked flea, viciously. “I've got my eye on a tumble-bug coming down the pike who, I'm sure, would like to invest in some nice green goods.”

“Hum-m-m,” snarled the bumblebee, savagely, to himself. “Seems to me folks are all confounded bores to-day. And all I wanted to say, too, was that I believe this is the hottest day we've had this Summer.”

ALEX. RICKETTS.

THE DIFFERENCE

By Harriet L. Huntington

“BUY-A paper, please!”
It was the voice and not the words that arrested Preston. He did not know how many mornings Rosina had tried to speak as he passed, only to find herself choked each time by a curious lump that came in her throat; but now, when delay and longing had driven her to desperate courage, the words broke through in a tone of shy allurements that was not a common thing to hear in the city streets.

He usually bought his paper at the stand at the foot of the stairs leading to the elevated station, but, as his quick glance took in the picturesque figure, with the red handkerchief tucked below the round, brown, little neck, the wisps of dark, curly hair blowing against the olive cheek, and the soft appeal in the big, black eyes, his ready good nature responded with an instant smile.

“*Si! si! Con piacere, piccolina!*” he answered, as he threw down a coin, and picked up a paper.

He stopped just long enough to catch the gleam of surprise and delight that came into her eyes, before he hurried on. But he could not see how she looked after him as he went down the street, watching until she saw him go up the stairs to his train. Then she turned, with a long breath, and absently gathered up the pennies that several customers had laid down under her unheeding eyes.

It was only a few months since Rosina's father, having prospered and established himself in business, had sent for her to come over and help him. She had kept his house, or his rooms,

for him, and as soon as she had learned enough of the language, the currency, and New York journalism, she had been put to tend the news-stand at the door of his little shop.

In a few weeks' time, she had come to know many of the faces and figures that passed her regularly every morning, and it was long ago, or so it seemed to her, that she had picked her hero among them—her idol. Her choice had been sudden, but it had been constant. Since the first morning when her bright eyes marked him—tall, broad-shouldered, handsome—among the hurrying procession, there had been no deviation of her worship. As the days passed by and brought no fulfilment of her hope that he would one day notice her, and stop of his own accord, a bolder purpose was conceived in her. It had been easier to think of speaking to him than to do it, but at last the fact had overtaken her imagination, and she was absorbed in the consciousness of it.

“*Con piacere, piccolina!*” The phrase lingered caressingly in her ears all the morning. If the pronunciation had been a trifle crude, the voice had been soft enough for her own native Tuscany, and gradually the tones of it began to weave themselves into vague anticipations of the day to come.

All the afternoon, she wished the hours away, and when the long night had been dreamed through, and she again took her place at the news-stand, her heart was beating fast in eager suspense. Patrons came, bought their papers and moved on, while she watched up the avenue with passive intentness. He might not stop, but at

least he would look toward her, and, somehow, she believed that if their eyes met he would speak. The minutes dragged by. It was past his usual time, and he did not come. He had never missed a morning since she first saw him, and a cold sense of trouble was creeping over her when she caught the swing of his square-set shoulders, half a block away. Her heart gave a great leap, and her hands clenched themselves tightly at her side. He was walking very fast, his shoulders raised, head forward, brows drawn into a faint scowl, and his eyes straight ahead. In a moment, he was opposite her, he had passed without a glance in her direction. Rosina stood, half trembling, for a few seconds; then she slowly unfolded her hands, and went into the shop.

"You sell-a paper," she said to her father. "I stay here. I not feel good."

She stayed inside all that day, but when the next morning came, in spite of her protests that she was still not well, her father insisted on her looking after the stand during the rush hours.

"This nice sunshine do you good. You rest all day if you like," he assured her. "You sell-a more paper than I," he added, honestly.

So Rosina went out as usual, but she stood facing the middle of the street, with an uncompromising shoulder turned up-town, and never lifted her eyes from the pile of papers before her; carrying on her transactions with a series of indifferent hands stretched out from a blurred panorama of overcoats black and brown and gray.

None the less, she knew when it was time for him to pass, and when the voice she had sworn to herself to forget asked suddenly, "Would you like to sell me a paper this morning?" it proved in that instant to be only the natural and expected thing that had happened, for she lifted to him eyes of smiling readiness, and answered, serenely:

"I like-a sell you paper ever' morning."

And so, through such simple, feminine wile, it came about that Preston transferred his patronage from the

news-stand at the corner to the one in the middle of the block. Sometimes his morning greeting was in English, sometimes in Italian, often barely a word, but he was never again too late or too hurried for the friendly smile that soon became to Rosina the enfolding sunlight of all her days, in which she moved and made for herself a beautiful dream life, touching the world of actualities at only one point—where she saw him.

Her afternoons were spent in the shop with her father. It was not easy to keep in front and near the window, and it took a long time and much patience in managing and watching to discover the hour when Preston came up from business. It was not until she had caught a precious, fugitive glimpse of him on three different days that she felt sure enough of the time to slip out to the stand. This was not a wholly defenseless proceeding on her part, because there were the evening papers, and if her father missed her she could always account for a customer, past or prospective.

These were days when Fate had only smiles for Rosina. Preston, of course, had read his evening paper in the train, but he learned that she could supply him with *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, and he fell into the habit of buying a copy every afternoon on his way home.

He had a half-romantic, half-artistic love for Italy, where he had spent one happy Winter, and the awakening of pleasant associations had been the secret of Rosina's first attraction for him. At least, that was the excuse that lingered in the background of his consciousness at times when he was otherwise, perhaps, too keenly alive to the charm of her fresh, round youth and her utter simplicity.

He had been buying *Il Progresso* for nearly two weeks, when one night, overtaken by a sense of obligation in regard to writing a certain much-deferred letter, he sat down at his desk only to find it empty of note-paper. He leaned back in disgust at the prospect of letting this rare resolution ex-

pire in barrenness. It was ten o'clock; there were little shops on the avenue open at this hour, he knew. It was a vast deal of trouble to take, but his mood was little less than heroic, so he put on his coat and hat and went out. He had no distinct recollection of stationery shops at the moment, but from habit he turned down the avenue. In the second block—why, of course! Rosina's background—there was the place! He stepped in, with a whimsical wonder as to what member of the family he should meet now.

The night that Tony Bregglio was stabbed by his son-in-law, six blocks away, was the first time Rosina's father had ever entrusted the shop entirely to her keeping. She managed so well during his long absence then that his sense of constant responsibility loosened somewhat, and after that he occasionally went away for part of an evening, or oftener would go back into their tiny living-rooms, and indulge in a comfortable nap before closing time.

So it chanced that when Preston walked in, it was Rosina's self, a little slow and sleepy-eyed, that came toward him. When she saw who it was, the heavy lids lifted with a flash that kindled all her features, and transformed the dull, ignorant Italian girl into a woman thrilling with the universal instinct that makes for beauty, joy and tragedy the world over.

Preston looked at her with a moment's wonder before he told his errand. He must have a certain kind of paper, and she could not understand just what he wanted, so he went behind the counter with her to search for it on the shelves. Together, they found it, and she wrapped it up for him while he stood close by and watched her until she grew silent and embarrassed under his stare.

"Do you know you look very pretty to-night, Rosina?" he asked.

She stopped her work to regard him with a surprise that answered for the unconsciousness of her attraction.

"I think you must have seen your

sweetheart to-night," he went on, teasingly. "Who is he? Is he Italian?"

"I not care for Italian." Her lip curled in contempt of her race.

"What! Not that good-looking Italian in the fruit store? Oh, Rosina! And I am sure I saw some very nice pears on your stand not many mornings ago!"

It was a random shot—he had seen the pears but not the Italian—however, it went home. Rosina's eyes blazed.

"Da' li'l man? I hate him! Why he not let me 'lone? I not eat his pears. T'ink I look at him? T'ink I—*O pazienza!*"

The English was too slow; half crying, she broke into a flood of liquid Italian, which Preston vainly tried to follow.

He caught her around the waist, and gave her a little shake.

"Never mind, Rosina, never mind! Don't trouble about him. I only meant to tease you. Don't cry!"

Her excitement subsided under his touch. She looked at him, and tried to smile, the adoration in her eyes shining through the tears.

With a quick movement, Preston drew her closer, and, for a moment, pressed his face against the warm, round hollow of her neck. She held her breath, but he did not kiss her. The next instant, he had seized his parcel, dropped some money on the counter, said "Good night," and was gone.

If Rosina, wide-eyed and unquestioning, lived that blissful moment over and over through long hours of the night, it was no less true that Preston walked home with a rather pleasant tingling in his veins. Nevertheless, he admonished himself that he had not behaved with the discretion to be desired, and that he must take no advantage of so mere and ignorant a child. Jove! what eyes she had, though!

The next morning, he did not get so much as a glimpse into them, for the long lashes were lowered persistently. For two or three days he did not stop

for more than a word, although, after the first day, Rosina had recovered her self-possession.

Then came a night that he was walking up from the elevated station at about eleven o'clock. He was returning from a meeting of the club of which he was a backsliding member; clubs having become a nuisance since he moved so far up-town. He had gone down to-night at the urgent solicitation of a friend, and was congratulating himself on having stuck to his resolution to come home early.

As he approached the stationer's, a belated customer came out, and, in the moment that the door swung wide, he saw Rosina standing in the middle of the shop. No one else was in sight. The impulse was so sudden, the acting upon it so instantaneous, he never could have explained his conduct; but straight, as if he had come up the street for no other purpose, Preston walked in.

Rosina showed neither surprise nor embarrassment, but smiled at him in open pleasure.

"Where is your father?" he asked, after a few idle words.

"He asleep, back in dere. He ver' tired."

"Does he leave you here alone every evening?"

"Oh, no! Jus' sometime. Well, pretty often, maybe. Sometime I go to sleep, too, in da chair. When man come in, I jump—he frighten me! Pretty soon I call fader; he lock up store and bot' go to bed."

"Is it safe for you to be here alone so late?"

She looked at him, wonderingly.

"No man harm me," she said, with a calm assurance that dismissed the subject.

It would be hard to tell what prompted Preston's next words. Perhaps he had some notion of correcting a false impression; perhaps some perverse demon spoke for him before he knew; it is certain that there was no logical connection in his mind between her remark and his next question.

"Were you angry at me the other night?"

"How you t'ink I could be angry at you?" she returned, her voice sunk almost to a whisper.

She had drawn close to him; her head almost touched his shoulder. The big eyes flashed him a look of shy confidence; then, in sudden confusion, the head drooped a little away from him. An unusual color glowed under the dusk of the olive cheek, the red lips pouted as they strove to hold back the hurrying breath. There was something wonderfully seductive in the mingled innocence and sensuousness of the girl, and Preston did that which he had meant never to do. He slipped his arms around her, and kissed her on neck and cheek and lips.

At his first touch, Rosina closed her eyes, and when the kisses ceased she nestled her face against his breast in dumb content. She felt no need of words. To her, this miracle of delight could have but one meaning. After a little, she turned slowly in his arms, and, with a long, shuddering sigh, the dark lashes fluttered upward, and she looked into his face.

Then, even as the prick of awakening conscience stung Preston to loosen his hold about her, the desire for speech awoke in her—for confirmation, for assurance—needless but precious.

"You love-a me?" she breathed, her eyes fixed on his.

With these words there dawned on Preston an imperfect perception of the mischief he was making, and he was alive to his duty at once. He held her off from him at arm's length, the tenderness gone from his face, the fire from his eyes.

"Love you?" he laughed. "No, of course I don't. You are my nice little friend, and I like you very well, but it wouldn't be right to say I love you. A kiss means nothing, Rosina, only that we are good friends. I know plenty of nice girls—" He broke off abruptly, all at once aware of a change in the blackness of Rosina's eyes, and conscious that she was fumbling at the bosom of her dress.

He sprang back just in time to avoid the streak of light that flashed

through the air; then he caught her wrist, and gripped it till she was glad to relax her fingers, and let the knife fall to the floor.

"American men do not love girls who kiss one minute—and kill the next. Remember that, Rosina," he said.

He held her until the heaving breast grew quieter, and the sullen eyes quailed under his own; then he let her go, and got quickly out of the door.

He walked rapidly up the street, impatient to be in his own room. The momentary excitement of the encounter was already gone. Alternately he cursed his weakness for having been drawn into such folly, and thanked his lucky stars it had been no worse. It might easily have been such a nasty row, with police and ambulance and heaven only knows what unpleasantness! The sense of injury swelled in him as he reflected upon Italian ingratitude and treachery. His intentions, from first to last, had been so free from harm, so positively kind!—but he might better have lied to the girl, as most fellows would have done, and then never have gone back. Vague, uncomfortable notions of revengeful fathers and life-long vendettas stirred in his mind. In the comfort of his room, he managed to dismiss these, but he did not settle himself to sleep until he had made a solemn resolution against future low-class entanglements of any variety.

As for Rosina, left standing mute and impotent in the shop corner, she spat the taste of his kisses from her mouth, and wiped the feel of them from her face. Then she picked up the slender steel, and tried in unavailing rage to snap it in two. Failing in that, she slipped it again into the bosom of her dress, and sat huddled for a while in the corner with her hate and despair. At last, she went in and roused her father to shut up the shop, while she crept off to bed in the darkness and there wept long and bitterly, even as her Amer-

ican sisters might have done, over a broken and dishonored idol.

Preston certainly was not a coward, and he had repeatedly assured himself that his conscience was perfectly clear, so there was no evident reason for the fact that for nearly a week he walked a block out of his way every morning to avoid passing Rosina's stand. Perhaps he wished to spare her sensibilities. After a day or two, he was able to smile grimly at the joke on his own foolish sentimentality, his moment's tenderness for an Italian news-girl, rewarded with a stiletto thrust! But it was a fortnight before he fully appreciated the picturesque value of the incident against the background of New York business life. After that, he gradually ceased to regret it. In the meantime, he gave an order at the corner stand to have his paper delivered at the house every morning.

Rosina did not know exactly when he began passing down the avenue again. For a long time, she never saw him if she could help it. One afternoon, she happened to see him coming up the street with a young lady, and from that time on she watched him again, but more covertly than of old. Several times she saw them together, usually in the afternoon, once in the evening. Always they were talking and looking at each other. The young woman was very tall, almost as tall as he, but not so beautiful; yet she had a winning face and a gracious dignity of bearing.

Rosina hated her at first. Then she began to wonder about her. More and more she wondered if he had ever kissed *her*. If he had not done so yet, he would some day. Then would he tell *her* that a kiss meant nothing? that other girls— Her rage against him surged up and choked all other thoughts. But the next time she saw them the wonder recurred. Perhaps a lady like this would not let him kiss her. Ah! but she would! Had not Rosina seen her eyes one day when she smiled into his face? And she was one who could suffer, too—this tall, proud lady! Rosina began to pity her.

Early one evening, while her father was in the shop, Rosina went to the door and stood just outside it, gazing idly up the street. There she saw them coming, talking as usual. They were only a door above her when Preston clapped his hand over his breast pocket, and stopped short. She did not catch his first words nor the reply; then she heard him say:

"But I don't like to ask you to walk back, and it's late now."

"You go back," the girl said. "I will walk on slowly and wait for you at the station. You can go quicker alone."

"Don't you mind? You won't have to wait but a minute. It's awfully good of you!" and he started back.

Rosina stared at the young lady as she walked slowly by. Would that proud head be bent in bitterness and humiliation some day, as hers had been? If this woman could only find some way to hurt him!—some better way than hers that had failed! Then, for an instant, her heart stood still at the daring of the thought that flashed across her mind. The opportunity and the inspiration had come together. She closed the door behind her, and slipped into the street.

At the foot of the elevated stairs, Alice Crosby paused to look up the street. He was out of sight, of course. As she was turning to go on, a voice spoke at her side.

"He ever kiss you?"

She looked around in amazement at the bareheaded girl beside her, scarce comprehending that the words were addressed to her.

"Has he kiss you yet?" demanded Rosina, all her pent-up excitement burning in the eyes that glowed in the dark like two live coals.

Miss Crosby restrained her first startled impulse to run up the stairs, and drew a little to one side. There was no mistaking the reference, and, in that instant, her curiosity was stronger than fear or pride.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"He kiss me, too," said Rosina, speaking low and fast. "I love-a him

long time, and I wait, wait—and one night he hug-a me hard and kiss me—*O Madre di Dio!* how he kiss!—then I say, 'You love-a me?' and he shove me away and laugh—say, 'No, jus' li'l' fren', kiss mean notting, plenta nice girl—'" Rosina's voice broke; she had never, even in thought, been able to finish that sentence, but she controlled herself desperately and went on: "He kiss you some time. You not like-a him say dat way to you? No. Den you look out! He kiss like-a hell—and mean notting!"

Miss Crosby had laid a hand on the girl's arm; in spite of her effort at composure, her grasp was tightening.

"Tell me, child, who are you?"

"Rosina Merolla. My fader keep-a da li'l' store, sell-a paper and such t'ing. What you do for him? You hurt-a him bad! I try, but he get too quick."

Rosina quivered with eagerness as she put her question, and, for yet another minute, Alice Crosby was compelled to forget herself.

"I cannot tell what I shall do. I am very, very sorry for you. Perhaps we are both foolish to care so much. You must not talk to me any more now."

Somehow, Rosina's passion for revenge died down under the gentle tones and the steady kindness of the gray eyes. She dropped her head and turned away, walking all around the block to reach the shop, that she might not meet Preston.

When he joined Miss Crosby at the station, he found her in a strangely quiet mood. All the way down in the train he studied her, and came to the conclusion that she was offended because of his carelessness in forgetting the tickets and leaving her while he went back for them. That was unreasonable, of course, but he did not wish her to feel displeasure on any grounds, real or fancied, to-night; so he made himself more than usually attentive and agreeable in the effort to win back her smiles, but with singular unsuccess.

The play was uncommonly good, but not once did Preston become so

absorbed in it as to fail to watch its effect on her, and not once during the evening did he see her preoccupation vanish in the interest of the stage scene.

After the play, his proposal of a little supper was met by a refusal, and then came a counter-suggestion.

"Do you mind walking a little way? I don't care to take a car at once," she said.

They walked in silence until the gay and crowded section of Broadway was left behind. Then he came closer to her, and slipped an arm under hers.

"What is the matter to-night? You are vexed at me about something. Tell me what it is."

She drew slightly away from him.

"Do you know Rosina Merolla?"

Preston braced himself mentally. So this was it! He did some of the most rapid thinking of his life before he answered:

"I used to buy my papers of a little girl named Rosina; I never knew her last name. Why?"

"Did you ever kiss her?"

"Now, see here," he expostulated; "who has been talking to you? and what sort of nonsense have they been telling you?"

"Did you ever kiss her?"

"I refuse to answer such a question. I want to know whom you have been listening to."

"I have been listening to Rosina. She said you kissed her, and then laughed at her. Is it true?"

Preston groaned. "What next? Well, what if it is partly true? You think I have been a brute, I suppose. How am I going to make you understand? You could see for yourself something what the girl was, couldn't you? Absolutely ignorant and foolish."

"Then, why kiss her?"

"Because I was a fool—for one moment. Do I need to tell you that I never thought one breath of harm to the girl?"

"But how did it happen, then, that she loved you for a long time, as she says?"

"For heaven's sake, don't ask me to

explain that! Can't you take my word a little bit against hers? I don't know what foolish notions she got into her head; I tell you, I never gave her the slightest grounds for them; but one night she put herself so in my way that I forgot myself for a moment, and kissed her. And then, instead of lying to her about it, I told her the truth."

Miss Crosby's voice was less clear and firm when she spoke again.

"She said you told her a kiss meant nothing."

"Certainly I told her that. It was true. Such a kiss means less than nothing. Would you have it otherwise? What would you have had me say to her? I admit I was weak—would you have had me be a scoundrel?"

"She said—you spoke as if there were plenty of girls——"

He turned to her, fiercely.

"Now, what are you driving at? What are you thinking? Alice! Surely, you don't put yourself into the class with girls like that? You don't suppose——"

"That poor child is breaking her heart with love and hate of you. She spoke as to a woman like herself, with a heart like her own. She knew I would understand, and I did! I cannot see that we are so different, or that a kiss means any less to her than to me!"

They walked three or four squares farther before Preston said:

"Shall we take the next car?"

Beyond a few words of formal commonplace, nothing more was spoken until they reached her door. As Preston lifted his hat, he said:

"It's a pity Rosina wasn't a little quicker. You might have been spared some annoyance."

"I don't understand you."

"Why, didn't she tell you that she tried to stab me?—but she wasn't quite quick enough."

Miss Crosby swayed and steadied herself against the door. Her voice was low and full of horror.

"Oh! I didn't know that! She said she tried to hurt you—but I didn't understand!"

"It didn't amount to anything. Your way is much more successful!"

"Did she—were you wounded at all?"

"Oh, no! not a scratch. I dodged. Don't let that worry you, Miss Crosby; I've lost no blood."

She turned from him to enter the house, but her hand was unsteady, and Preston took the key from her, and unlocked the door. Inside the

dimly lighted hall, she faced him again, as he stood just outside the threshold.

"I didn't mean to be unjust," she said, reaching out her hand.

Preston took it, half reluctantly at first. He bent forward to look closely into her eyes; then he stepped across the threshold, and took her in his arms and kissed her.

"Don't you think there *is* a difference, after all?" he said.



HAFIZ

GAZALS of water-lilies and the sun,
O Persian poet, thou hast sung to me,
And made thy vision mine, these things to see:
Life, as a two-doored house; oblivion,
As writing on the sea. When day is done,
Dreams are the fancy's night watch. Destiny
Hath oases—the wine shops! Cypress-tree
And south wind, Salma, sweet girl—ye are one.

Green, serpent-blinding emeralds in grails,
From magic caverns of Alburz and Kaf,
Are thine, whose glowing riches never fails:
But I from modern clay rose wine will quaff
In honor of thy words—"My memory praise
By living joyously some few fair days."

HENRY TYRRELL.



GROSS CARELESSNESS

MISS ELLICOTT—Why did you discharge your chauffeur? He made such a fine appearance.

MRS. LIPPINCOTT—But the man had no tact. Why, once when I was dozing, he ran over a fat woman, and almost jostled me out of my seat!



IF a woman cannot induce a man to make a fool of himself for her, she will make a fool of herself for him.

A HOUSEHOLD HOBGOBLIN

By Zoe Anderson-Norris

THE two started out in the rain together—Elizabeth and her friend, who was a widow. Their umbrellas dripped.

"Shall we take a car here?" asked the widow; and they took a car.

"I am sure I shall be happier," said Elizabeth, "now that I have made up my mind. You and I can live in a little flat together, and be cozy, can't we? It's a good deal better than being married. We have been friends for a long time. We'll be very congenial. Unless you are happily married," she assured herself, "you'd a great deal better not be married at all. But I wish it hadn't rained to-day," she finished, and sighed.

"Forget the rain," advised the widow. "We shall be gay, of course, in our little flat. You are wise. Why live unhappily when you are independent, when you have some money of your own? This is a free country. Be free."

"I think," reflected Elizabeth, "that it will be good to be free. When you are married, you can hardly call your soul your own. You must dress to please your husband—I don't mind that, if only I *could* please him—and talk to please him, and walk to please him. Why, sometimes when I am dressing to go out, I nearly go into hysterics, Jack nags me so about everything I am putting on. I shall be very glad to be rid of all that."

"It is probably not the only thing you will be glad to be rid of," flashed the widow, "nor the only hundredth thing. There's a flat for rent in this street. Shall we get out here?"

They got out.

It rained. It not only rained, but it poured. At the door of the apartment-house they furlled their umbrellas, and pushed the janitor's bell. After a long time, a woman, in a gray shawl the color of the day, emerged from some subterranean depth, and confronted them with a countenance apparently composed of stone, in which nature, or ill-nature, had carved various and sundry curiously repellent and uncompromising lines. It was the janitress.

"There's a flat for rent here," asked the widow, pleasantly, "isn't there?"

"Yes," answered the janitress, and, opening the door, she preceded them down a long hall, and opened another door.

"The rear apartment," she announced, standing aside to let them pass in. Then she followed them, asking questions:

"Any children?"

"No," answered the widow.

"Any dogs?"

Elizabeth turned white, and her friend pressed a cautioning hand on her arm.

"No," she answered.

"How many in family?"

"Two."

"Women?"

"Yes."

"This flat is fifty dollars," announced the janitress, suddenly, and vaulted back a foot or two to observe the effect.

The pair huddled together.

"It isn't worth thirty," said Elizabeth, in a frightened whisper, "and it's dark. I should die of the horrors in rooms that were dark. I couldn't stand them."

At that the janitress, without a word, freezingly showed them the door, and shut it in their faces.

"I tremble to think," sighed Elizabeth, safe in the street, going steadily against the rain showering heavily on them, "what would have happened if she had known about Fido."

The widow turned upon her in surprise. "If you want to rent a flat in this town," said she, "keep quiet about Fido. A cat might live in a New York flat. It has nine lives. But a dog—never! That is, in a flat with a janitress."

Elizabeth stared gloomily into the rain.

"I'm glad," mused she, "that we have a hall-boy. He's very kind to me sometimes, David is. And he never says a word about Fido."

The widow occupied a moment in thought.

"I believe," she decided, "that the creature raised the price of that flat on us because we are women. A janitress never likes women."

Elizabeth continued to gaze into the downpour.

"A man is a protection," concluded she. "Isn't he?"

"He is," assented the widow. "No matter how good-for-nothing he is, he's a protection. A lone woman is subjected to all sorts of slights and ill-treatment from other women in authority, particularly if she is a widow. I am a widow—I know."

By-and-bye, "And of all the women in authority," she continued, "barring the landlady of a boarding-house, the janitress is the most brutal to women. Unless you have a husband, it is almost impossible to live in a flat with a janitress."

They walked on and on in the drenching rain to the next flat on their list. There, the janitress was occupied in polishing the door-knobs.

Ascending the steps, they furled their umbrellas, and stood looking at her in a frightened way.

They might have been stone lions on a stoop, for all the notice she took of them.

"There's a flat for rent here," asked the widow, presently, "isn't there?"

"No."

"But," objected the widow, "it was advertised."

"It's rented."

"How much was it?"

"It's rented."

"I understand that," explained the widow, suavely; "but I should like to know at about what price the flats rent for in this neighborhood before I inquire further."

The janitress had finished polishing the door-knob. Silently, she opened the door, and closed it with herself on the inside.

Somewhat disconsolately the pair once more walked into the straight and steady rain.

"My shoes are wet," complained Elizabeth.

"And so are mine," returned the widow. "I hope the next flat will have a janitor. They are not so uncompromising, as a rule. They are kinder to women. Men are always kinder to women than women are."

"I'm glad," said Elizabeth, "that we have a hall-boy. At first I was afraid of him. He had so many brass buttons. But, as I say, he is very kind to me, as a rule."

"A hall-boy is the only thing to have," concluded the widow, "unless you can afford to live in apartments with liveried flunkies and mirrors and polished brass. When you come down to the fifty-dollar flat or the thirty-five-dollar one, you confront the janitress. And sometimes I think I would rather be dead than have to confront a janitress."

She frowned into the storm.

"Nobody knows," she went on, "what terrors they are. Life is hardly worth living with them. They object to everything you do and say and think. Yes. They get to know what you think through the dumb-waiters or speaking-tubes or something, and tell it, elaborating and embroidering upon it till you hardly recognize it when it comes back to you again, which it always does. . . . To live in a

flat with a janitress, you've got to be backed by a husband," she finished, and was silent awhile.

"A husband!" Elizabeth repeated, in an awed tone, and was also silent until they arrived eventually at the next flat on their list.

It seemed to be a day for polishing door-knobs. The janitress there polished imperturbably. As they approached, she added renewed vigor, bending over her work in an absorbed and chilling manner which had the effect of leaving them out in the cold.

"Is there a flat for rent here?" asked the widow, with even more timidity than formerly.

"It's rented," came the answer.

"I wish," remarked Elizabeth, audibly, "that we'd known before we came they were all rented."

The janitress turned a granite face upon her.

"Did anybody ask you to come?" queried she, to which question, there being practically no answer, they went out again into the rain. It showed no sign of decreasing. It rather increased. The rows upon rows of flat buildings, gray and pink new ones, brown and red old ones, swam in a mist. The streets shone grayly. The skies showed hardly at all, so blurred were they.

"Sometimes," began the widow, "I think these janitresses are soured by their life underground and out of the sunshine; and sometimes I think they are born that way."

Elizabeth stopped short at the corner of a street.

"Let's go home now," she implored, "and get some tea to cheer us. My skirts are wet; my shoes are wet—I'm drenched all over."

On the way, "Did you say," she questioned, wistfully, "that the jani-

tress was not so kind to women without husbands?"

"That," reiterated the widow, grimly, "was what I said. They are brutal to them."

"There are worse things than husbands," reflected Elizabeth, softly.

"As long as there's a janitress in the world," decided the widow, "you can depend upon that."

"Besides," she ruminated, "a widow, after all, is a lonely sort of creature. I know. Apparently she is the gayest of the gay; but in reality there are many dark and lonely hours that she must live through. Sometimes a widow is the loneliest creature in the world."

At home, the hall-boy smilingly bowed them in. At the door of her apartments, a joyous yelp greeted Elizabeth. She stooped, and clasped Fido in her arms.

"Darling," she murmured, "I hope you'll never know how near you came to living with a janitress."

Making themselves comfortable, they had cups of tea, sitting cozily in opposite chairs, sipping it.

"I'm glad," repeated Elizabeth, "that we never see the janitress in this flat."

"I should think you would be," nodded the widow. "There's nobody to make your life a burden but the hall-boy, and your husband is here to wrestle with him."

Elizabeth set her cup down, and went to the window. She drew aside the curtain, and calmly observed the downpour, which, being outside, no longer depressed her.

"There are worse things than husbands," smiled she, and added, her eyes on the corner where the car stopped and people were alighting, "I think it's just about time for Jack to come home."



LOVE is blind—but not when there's money in sight.

LES PÈLERINS

LES pèlerins d'amour suivent le long chemin,
 Les pèlerins d'amour suivent le chemin triste,
 Et la fée aux yeux clos les guide par la main
 Vers les grèves de pourpre et les lacs d'améthyste.
 Les pèlerins d'amour suivent le dur chemin.

Comme les mages saints peints sur les vieux tryptiques,
 Ils s'avancent, tendant, éperdument les bras
 Vers les lointains fonds d'or aux floraisons mystiques.
 Ils ont faim; leurs pieds nus saignent; ils sont très las,
 Mais ils vont en chantant les éternels cantiques.

Ils songent à l'heure où, dans les roses du soir,
 Surgira—prix hautain de misères trop brèves—
 Le temple fabuleux d'or et de marbre noir.
 Vers le vrai Dieu, perdus aux splendeurs de leurs rêves,
 Ils vont, ils vont, sans rien entendre, sans rien voir.

Ils passent, le front haut, par la ville aux idoles:
 Le rire des païens exalte leur orgueil.
 . . . Voyageur, entends-tu l'appel des vierges folles
 Vers l'époux? Entends-tu l'appel de bon accueil? . . .
 Mais ils marchent, fleuris de saintes auréoles.

Les pèlerins d'amour montent le long chemin,
 Les pèlerins d'amour montent le chemin triste,
 Et je me suis traîné, d'un effort surhumain,
 Vers tes lèvres, ô reine, et tes yeux d'améthyste;
 Et la rose mystique a fleuri dans ta main.

ANDRÉ LESOURD.



WHY NOT?

HE—I wonder what you would do if I were suddenly to kiss you.
 SHE—Why not make a test case of it?



THERE is only one man to whom women can be crueler than to the one she
 hates—the one who loves her.

THE CAPE SAN FORTUNADAD CONCESSION

By Prince Vladimir Vaniatsky

WHEN a man is born with a fever of gaming in his veins, Fate has surely marked him for a gamester. At some one time or another, in some way, he will take big risks, and gamble against the world, if his sphere is large enough. Look back over history, and count the great men—Alexander to Napoleon—all gamesters, every mother's son of them. I have always taken exception to Disraeli, when he said that "gamester and cheat are synonymous." The wily premier was a gambler, if nature ever made one.

Therefore, I, Pierre de Deux Ponts, have no hesitation in confessing I am a gambler—but I always play for large stakes. Since the earliest days of my life, I have gambled. As a child, I tossed sous with the servants of my father's house. Later—but does not the world know of Pierre de Deux Ponts, the frequenter of all gaming-houses the world over, he whose name is enshrined in imperishable fame at the *salles* of Monte Carlo, and whose exploits at the German tables, before the paternal Prussians forbade gambling at the spas, were known to all the civilized nations?

Late in the Autumn of the year, I had returned to Paris, prepared for a Winter such as I love. The wide sweep of the boulevards, the glitter of their lights, the irresistible charm of their thousand habitués, all were open to me. There were my much-frequented restaurants, where my tastes and dislikes are so well known that I am always served just as I will; the *chantants*, where the new faces and the

old ones still hold an attraction for me, and the theatres.

I had abandoned myself to the pleasures of a Winter in Paris. My plans were all made. My apartment in the rue de la Barouillière had been put in order. A new find, in the Dutch school, by Huguens, had been hung in a central place on the walls of my drawing-room, and its predecessor, an Italian, after the style of Titian, banished to the dining-room.

In the midst of all my preparations, I was suddenly interrupted. I had been driving in the Bois behind a pair of wonderful Kentucky horses, imported by a member of the Jockey Club, which I thought of buying. When I returned to my apartment, I found a caller awaiting me.

I looked at him through the invisible window which is arranged between the drawing-room and my apartment. He was tall, spare, with a long, lean nose which curved at the corners underneath the smartly-trimmed mustache. In his button-hole was one of the inevitable ribbons.

As I stood watching him, he picked up a carved Ceylonese casket which lay on a table. He studied it with the discriminating eye of a connoisseur, then replaced it. He adjusted his glass so as to study my Huguens. He glanced over a portfolio of Bartolozzi engravings which lay close to him. After he had waited some little time, I entered the drawing-room.

"M. de Deux Ponts," he said, and bowed gravely.

"Colonel von Altemann," I an-

swered, glancing at his card. "Pray be seated," I continued, and bowed him to a chair.

"I have come, *monsieur le comte*," he said, "as the representative of a syndicate which is well aware of your existence. For many reasons, we may call it the *Société Anonyme*."

"*De Bains de Mer*," I continued, softly. Von Altemann nodded his head. "*Et de Cercle d'Étrangers*," I concluded.

"It is not impossible," he answered. "You are aware, *monsieur le comte*, that the *Société's* lease on its present situation is not for forever-and-a-day. It is liable to be terminated at some future time, leaving the *Société* homeless. You know full well, *monsieur le comte*, what that would mean to the great world."

"Indeed, it would be a calamity."

"The directors of the *Société*," von Altemann continued, "have been much worried over the possibility of the termination of their lease. Nowhere else in the world is there as wonderful a location as their present situation. At no other point is the air so bracing, so languorous—is nature so kind. All this, with one exception, and I know the spot. It is the Bay of Cape San Fortunadad, which extends from a South American republic into the waters of the Caribbean Sea. I was there some years ago, when a rebellion was in progress at that place."

"Cape San Fortunadad! What an appropriate name!" I exclaimed.

"Exactly," he answered. "But, *monsieur le comte*, the object of my visit is this: The *Société* has authorized me to ask you to undertake a mission for them. It is thought possible to obtain a concession of the peninsula of San Fortunadad, with the surrounding land, from the government of Maraguay. The directors wish you to undertake this task."

"It is impossible, Colonel von Altemann," I said, shortly. "I am established in Paris for the Winter. For the ensuing months, I desire complete relaxation, to abandon myself to the

luxurious existence of a boulevardier. I cannot consider the offer."

"But, *monsieur le comte*, the *Société* gives you a limitless credit for your operations. Whatever remuneration you mention, will be yours, whether you are successful or not."

"Think you, I care for money?" I asked, and looked directly at him. I saw his eyes linger for a second over the furnishings of my drawing-room.

"Hardly, *monsieur*," he answered.

"I am tired, enervated," I answered, "and I do not feel that I would care to undertake such a mission at present. I have always taken exquisite care of my health. At this moment, on those grounds alone, I must decline the *Société's* offer. You understand, Colonel von Altemann, that it is for no reasons other than the ones I have mentioned."

Von Altemann hesitated.

"*Monsieur*," he said, "I have but one appeal to make. You are a gambler. You know the tremendous excitement of the game, the wonderful thrill of it. This mission will be a game against the powerful interests of a new syndicate which is endeavoring to obtain the same concession. Their agent starts next week from Genoa for Maraguay."

"I appreciate all that, colonel," I answered, "but—my health."

"I would go myself," said von Altemann, "but, there is a bitter feud existing between the president of the Republic of Maraguay and myself. On the other hand, he is friendly with Baron von Schweltinghaus, who is to represent the German company."

"Von Schweltinghaus!" I cried, leaping from my chair.

"Why, yes," he answered, somewhat surprised at my sudden interest.

"You may inform the *Société*," I said, deliberately, "that Pierre de Deux Ponts will accept their offer, and will leave Paris to-morrow for Maraguay, and, most probably, will reach the capital of that country before Baron von Schweltinghaus."

Von Altemann flushed with pleasure.

"You are very good, monsieur," he replied.

"What terms am I to offer the president?" I asked.

"Anything which you may consider proper; the maintenance of the Maraguan army, subventions for whatever you desire. Only, the total yearly amount must not exceed three million pounds sterling," indicated von Altermann.

"The *Société* is liberal," I returned.

"Wealth is a solemn thing," gravely said von Altermann, "and its possibilities are unlimited."

The magnificent new French cruiser, *La Pucelle*, was to leave Brest harbor three days later. The interests of the French Republic in a state bordering upon Maraguay were endangered by a revolutionary spasm, thereby endangering some millions of francs of good French money invested there in government bonds and in private enterprises. Therefore the ministry of marine had decided that the presence of *La Pucelle*, in addition to the fleet already in the waters of the South Atlantic, would be beneficial.

The commander of *La Pucelle* was indebted to me in more ways than one. I had once saved him from dishonor. When Colonel von Altermann left my apartment, to telegraph my answer to the *Société*, I sent a telegram to Henri de Guoin, *capitaine de vaisseau*, commanding *La Pucelle*, asking that I might be permitted to accompany the cruiser to South America.

My answer came the same night, and I packed my luggage and left for Brest, taking with me letters of credit which Colonel von Altermann had furnished me, allowing me an unlimited credit against the account of the *Société* with the banking house of Rothschild Frères of Frankfort-on-the-Main.

When *La Pucelle* headed her graceful nose for the South American continent, my heart was filled with exultation. I had long cherished an animosity against the Baron von Schweltinghaus, who had occasioned me some trouble in a prior episode in my life. While I recognized the virtues of the

Baron von Schweltinghaus, I had long hoped that fortune would some time give me an opportunity to revenge myself upon him. I desired to do him no personal injury, only to outwit him in some game in which the stakes were high. At the moment Colonel von Altermann had mentioned von Schweltinghaus, I had decided to accept the *Société's* offer.

Knowing that Henri de Guoin would take *La Pucelle* out of Brest harbor in a few days, bound for South America, I decided that I would take passage on the cruiser, and beat the Baron to Maraguay by three weeks or more. For he would not depart until some days later, and that line on which he would sail made stops at Buenos Ayres, at Montevideo and Rio de Janeiro, before proceeding up the coast to Maranao, the seaport of the City of Maraguay.

While I hoped that I would be enabled to gain the concession before the arrival of the baron, I knew too well the character of the Latin races to expect a prompt reply from President Maldonado, of Maraguay. I knew that he would hold off for the highest possible terms, before he granted the concession, and that it would take much parleying before I could finally land him.

The Republic of Maraguay is one of the most beautiful spots in the world. The city of Maraguay lies silent and white at the foot of a vast mountain, which rises to a height of fully three and a half kilometres, and which is known as *Mont de Cruz*.

By the time I had reached the City of Maraguay, President Maldonado was well aware of the means of my arrival, and he knew that *La Pucelle* was one of the finest vessels in the French navy.

The Secretary of the French legation was at the wharf to meet me on my arrival, and insisted that I should share the hospitality of the French legation, which occupied a beautiful building of white marble, lying in a garden of tropical verdure.

I had carefully estimated the time of the probable arrival of the Baron von Schweltinghaus, and, after putting my preliminary machinery into execution, I made a trip to the peninsula of San Fortunadad.

I have been accustomed to the most beautiful scenery of Europe, but never before had such a vision of loveliness unrolled itself before my astonished eyes. Monte Carlo, with all its vaunted beauty, paled into utter insignificance before the wonderful panorama spread before me.

I caught my breath as I gazed about me. Surely, Colonel von Altremann had not overestimated the beauties of the place. Upon the high plateau of the peninsula, rich with its verdant vegetation, I saw the white walls of the future casinos of the *Société*. I peopled the solitude with the gay crowds of Monaco, locating splendid bands in the amphitheatre, and imagined all the wonderful resources of civilization placed about the spot. But, somehow, the idea revolted me. All was so perfect in its solitude, in its utter isolation.

When I returned to Maraguay, I had an audience with President Maldonado. He was a weak-looking man, with a dissipated face, and eyes that were frankly voluptuous. I gauged him as a barometer does the atmospheric pressure. I knew that if my battle were alone with Maldonado, my game was already won. As we sat chatting, a tall, gaunt figure swung easily into the room, and stood in the embrasure of a window. My eyes turned to the new-comer, a frocked *padre*, of a grim and austere look. Beyond him, through the window, I could see the peak of *Mont de Cruz*, with the snow-white cross, formed by two ravines, high on its summit. The cross was over all, I thought, and the church was visible in the hand that governed the state.

Padre Felipe was grimly courteous to me. He asked me much concerning the state of the church in France. I told him all I knew, and regretted the attitude which the government was taking toward the religious houses.

"The *señor conte* is a good child of Mother Church, then?" he asked, and his flashing eyes burned into mine, much as I have since fancied the eyes of the inquisitors might have done during the time of the Inquisition.

"I am not a good child of Mother Church," I answered, "for I have fallen into many errors."

"Then, *señor conte*, do not forget them, and do penance for them. The arms of the Church are open to all." Padre Felipe turned and left the room, his bare feet lightly sounding on the polished floor, the big beads of his wooden rosary clicking against one another.

"He is a very holy man," said Maldonado, as the *padre* left.

"For that I reverence him deeply," I answered, and, little by little, led up to the subject of the concession. I knew well that the republic was deeply in debt, and that the government was none too stable. Maldonado clutched out greedily for the offers which I made. The maintenance of a large standing army and the assistance of the *Société* in funding the Maraguanan debt, were the bait which I used. Maldonado trembled with excitement. He saw, in my offers, a possibility to secure for himself the presidential chair for countless years, and saw the gradual, but certain, lining of his pockets.

Yet tact and diplomacy, costly presents, all had no influence when I brought him to the point of signing the concession. Always, he would hold off, demurring on some slight pretext or another.

In that, I could see the masterful hand of Padre Felipe. With him, I knew not how to deal. Yet, there was a magnificent set of altar furnishings and vestments sent to the cathedral of Maraguay, with my compliments. Padre Felipe acknowledged them in a quaint, courteous note.

Three weeks slipped slowly by, and yet Maldonado hovered undecided before signing the concession. The instrument was drawn up, the various sections of the agreements decided upon, and all that was wanting was

Maldonado's signature and mine, as the representative of the *Société Anonyme*.

On the day I thought Baron von Schweltinghaus might arrive, I took occasion to drive slowly past the station at the time for the train from Maranao. I was not disappointed, for I saw the pudgy figure of the baron enter a cab, and go in the direction of the *Hotel de Inglese*. Hardly had the baron been there an hour when I drove to the hotel, and with much solemnity left my card for him. I thought it better to let him know I was there. Whether or not he would connect me with the fight for the concession, I was unable to decide. If he did not, the knowledge of my presence would do no harm; and, if he did, it would be a warning that the field was finally pre-empted, and that he might return to Germany without the concession.

The baron as promptly returned my call. I met him at the door when he arrived at the legation, and ushered him into the drawing-room.

"What brings you here?" the baron asked.

"I expect to go up in the Andes, shortly, for a tour of exploration and some shooting after big game. Would you care to join me?"

"Ah, no; I am here on business," he replied, and rubbed his fat hands together in a satisfied manner. I politely wished he might have very great success, and, after a few words more, our meeting ended.

When President Maldonado issued invitations for a state dinner at the government palace, both the baron and myself were included in the invitations.

The Señora Maldonado, the President's third wife, was a woman of more than ordinary beauty and of much wit. We had been quite friendly during my stay in Maraguay, and, at the dinner, I was placed at her left hand.

When dinner was finished and most of the guests were departing, Maldonado drew the baron aside and spoke to him. For my part, Señora Maldonado told me to stay, that we were to have

a quiet game of roulette, and that she was to act as banker. There were about a score of us remained for the roulette.

My first play was on a *transversale* of three numbers, while the baron played a *carré* of four numbers. I won. At the second play, I placed my money on a *douzaine*, and the baron placed his on two columns *à cheval*. Again, I won. I varied my play a number of times, almost always winning.

When the game finally broke up, the baron and I alone remained. Each had been invited to stay after the others were gone.

We were seated at a table in the room where the roulette wheel stood. Maldonado sat at its head, the baron and myself on the sides, and the Señora Maldonado at the foot.

"Señores," said Maldonado, "you have both come to me for the concession of Cape San Fortunadad, on which each of you wishes to establish a health resort, with such amusements as may be deemed advisable for invalids. "The Conte de Deux Ponts first made offers for the concession. I had frequently determined to grant it. But, at each time, some point on which I was not satisfied presented itself. The Baron von Schweltinghaus, without knowing that the count was making offers for the concession, has offered practically the same terms. He is an old friend of mine, and the German interests in Maraguay are very strong. So you may see, señores, my position. I cannot give the concession to one without slighting the other, a thing which I do not care to do. But there is one alternative—that the two of you draw lots between you for the concession. Is my proposition acceptable?"

The baron looked at me, and I looked at the baron.

"There is no objection on my part," I said.

"Nor on mine," returned the baron. Señora Maldonado laughed, gaily.

"I shall be the Goddess of Chance," she cried.

It was decided that we should cut

cards for the victory. Maldonado brought out two decks, and blindfolded his wife. In each hand she held a pack of cards. The baron and I were to have three cuts apiece, and the highest cuts should win.

I made my first cut—a knave. The baron cut a queen.

On the second cut I brought a queen, and the baron a knave.

When we were ready for the third cut, there was a breathless silence. The baron cut first, a king, the highest cut; but I tied him.

Again we cut, and I made a deuce, while the baron cut an ace, the lowest cut.

"Are you satisfied?" I questioned the baron.

"Perfectly," he answered.

Señora Maldonado drew the concession in my favor out of a drawer, and held it out to her husband. He dipped a pen in ink, and, in nervous, scrawling letters, traced his name, "Ferdinand Maldonado y Monteverde," at the foot of the document. I took the concession from him. As I did so, the sound of bare feet on the floor caught our attention. All turned to see Padre Felipe, standing cold and silent in the doorway.

He pointed with outstretched finger through the open windows of the balcony. The first rays of dawn fell upon the Mountain of the Cross, and the

white snow in the two transverse ravines was turned into a shimmer of blood.

"The morning dawns, and the Cross is above Maraguay," Padre Felipe cried. Then, with a finger of denunciation, he turned to Maldonado.

"When you signed that concession, you were no longer president," he exclaimed; "the senate, at two o'clock this morning, in sudden executive session, impeached you and forfeited your office. Manuel Herrara y Gijo is President of Maraguay."

"Who are you?" gasped von Schweltinghaus.

"I am Maraguay," the friar answered, and turned, with his finger pointed at the cross gleaming brilliantly from the dark sides of the mountain.

Maldonado's face was ashen, and he staggered weakly to the window. Señora Maldonado alone braved the friar, but she turned beneath the terrible gleam in his eyes, and, by the side of her husband, went slowly from the room.

I am not sorry, for it would have been a sacrilege to have built a casino on the peninsula of San Fortunadad. As it is, desolate and lonely, it is majestic. With the encroachment of tawdry civilization, it would be robbed of all its charms.



SUFFICIENT CAUSE

MARY—But why do you think they are so certain to fall in love?

ANN—In the first place, their parents hate each other; and, in the second, neither of them has a penny in the world.



HE who asks to be loved for himself alone asks much for little.

AGGIE

By Emery Pottle

THERE is a popular belief among refined young men who are much alone in a great city, so Mr. Burleigh insists, among young men piously inclined toward the church, and among certain inefficient creatures lacking the courage of matrimonial convictions, that, as they put it, friendships with noble women are "helpful" things. They embark upon such friendships with a sweet confidence and a confessional tongue; and, in an incredibly short time, they have shamelessly divulged every two-penny secret in their hearts, and many of those belonging to their neighbors, and, incidentally, there is a broken heart to pay for it all.

There is no denying that this ingenuous interchange of experience is a restful, quieting diversion—to the teller, he insists. Since most of us lead lonely lives, the gentle interest and sympathy of any soul affects us more deeply, perhaps, than would otherwise be discreet. The lonelier we are, the keener we become for an outlet for the uncorrelated thoughts, emotions, beliefs and disbeliefs constantly festering within us.

Young Howard was lonely. That ought in itself to outline his story—but it is easy enough to amplify the conditions. When he left his college, his widowed mother, confidently relying on the remains of a very considerable beauty and the memories of an early romance that increased in sentimental value as her years multiplied, brought him to New York. As she had suspected, the confidence she put in her accessories was not misplaced. It was a matter of only

half-an-hour's reminiscent talk, and a slight exhibition of young Howard's capabilities and virtues, to secure for him a position in the banking house of the respectable gentleman who had been the party of the second part in the romance previously hinted at. This done, she shook out her widow's weeds, and returned to her home, leaving, with blessings and warnings and tears, her son Arthur.

The first flush of it all tingled on the cheeks of Arthur Howard—the importance of responsible position, the feeling of independent resource, the lofty business ideals he formulated, the rush of traffic, the roar of the streets, the lights of the town, the sense of power—impending, crushing, indomitable power that swept men down, or caught them into heavens of success!

Later, the personal side of him began to assert itself. He yearned for companionship and confidential affection. The gaiety of the town life that had, at first, seemed to include him in a tacit camaraderie and a genial hail-fellow greeting, receded from him; the intimate, laughing groups of restaurateurs appeared cold and indifferent; the crowds on the streets—in which for days and days he never detected a familiar face or a friendly eye—hurt and repelled him.

Save Burleigh, an old bachelor friend of his father's, whom Arthur called "a cynical old bachelor"—probably with truth—he did not know well a single soul in town.

It depressed Howard, after the congenial confusion of a college dormi-

tory, to come in night after night to his spotless, bare-faced, square-toed room, in a house silent as a tomb and smelling of queer, unnatural odors. And had it not been for an uncompromising virtue—the one commonly known by that name—untampered with and enthusiastically strong, he would have sought ways to lessen his loneliness scarcely fitting for our tale.

Sunday was always Arthur's most dreary day. It had never occurred to him that he could do anything to excess, and the upshot of it all was that, after two pipes and a half-dozen cigarettes, a Sunday paper, a chapter or two in a book recommended to improve his mind, he was left with a helpless weight of monotonous hours upon his back.

Since Sunday was his day of captivity, so was it destined to be his day of release. Moved by a semblance of graciousness and a reluctant feeling that he ought to look up young Howard, as a tribute to his father's memory, Richard Burleigh called upon the boy at his lodgings upon a Sabbath afternoon. The young fellow's gratitude for the visit, and his eager, pathetic efforts to supply Burleigh with noxious American cigarettes and ice-water and the one easy chair with a treacherous leg, so wrought upon the older man's nerves and his guilty sense of a lack of decent courtesy on his part, that, after a few perfunctory questions in regard to Arthur's liking for New York, and the conditions of his servitude at the bank, he hastily rose and insisted on his host accompanying him to see Agnes Salisbury.

As Burleigh long afterward said, why, in God's name, he ever hit on such a plan was more than he could fathom, unless because, seeing how impossible it was to converse with the boy, he had a blind conception that Agnes, who was only one degree more impossible, would put young Arthur to the blush.

They found her in her studio. For Agnes Salisbury was an artist—at any rate she was constantly painting slight female figures with flowing

hair and clogging draperies, standing beside a pool, one hand lightly laid on the head of a savage, crouching beast of prey. These pictures were symbolic, as the case might be, of Youth, Purity, Womanhood, Innocence, Suspicion and the like. Agnes made her real living by doing pen-drawings of the modes for a fashion magazine.

Burleigh never openly explained to any one his acquaintance with Agnes Salisbury, though he called her Aggie, and, on his occasional visits, occupied the time by talking, in an unusually gentle way, of her dead mother. To-day, she gave them tea out of a graceful, but unsanitary-looking, brass teapot. Her thin, indefinite, hungry face lighted up with challenging hospitality, as she explained that there were but two tea-cups. Howard insisted on having his tea in a cracked marmalade jar. Agnes took to him at once, after that.

The two got on extraordinarily well. Burleigh, reluctantly sipping tea at a dangerous angle in an old steamer-chair, found no necessity, even once, of mentioning Aggie's mother. Half kneeling on two dusty denim cushions, the girl dispensed her refreshment, and carried on a rattling talk with young Howard about something or other that they both hated, and something else that was perfectly heavenly.

"I'd no idea the girl could chatter like this," Burleigh thought, idly. "And, good God, how that boy keeps it up! He's said more to her in ten minutes than I've said—or wanted to—in all the time I've known her."

His dispassionately critical eyes collected the scattered elements of her make-up. The rough, blue sailor-suit, short-skirted and collarless, that she affected, was paint-spotted; her somewhat untidy, yellowish hair escaped, wispish, from a confining velvet band; the strings of her broad, low boots were untied—her well-kept hands alone—fine, generous, maternal hands—offered a visible earnest of her inner worth.

"Unquestionably," mused Burleigh, "not a girl to fall in love with."

"Aggie," he presently said, relievedly, "I am going. Er—a—I've another call, you know. I shall come again—er—some day."

They rose—the three; Howard with polite awkwardness. He felt that he wanted to stay, but could not control the social amenities easily enough to remain with grace.

"You'll not have more tea, Mr. Burleigh?" asked Aggie, seizing the first pretext at command for detention.

The question made him shrink. He hastily forestalled her willing hands. "No, give it to Howard. You stay, old chap. There's no need—really, you know—I've not the least notion—oh, stay, of course—Aggie will—I'm sure—"

"Yes, stay, Mr. Howard," Agnes assisted him, kindly.

As Burleigh got into his coat, he gave her another chance. "He's rather lonely, Aggie, I fancy. Er—be nice to him—if you've the time."

She smiled, with a certain humility. "I think—I understand."

"Mighty uncanny," thought Burleigh, "this artistic temperament," and went away.

"Are you lonely?" put forth Agnes, her hands folded about her knees, looking straight into Arthur Howard's frank eyes.

"Terribly—at times," he answered, eagerly. "You are the only one who—who—that is, you know—well, there are so few people that care—at all—about a chap, that—"

"Yes, I know," she finished for him. "I understand what it is to be—alone. You must come often here," she added, with an accent equivalent to an entreaty.

Arthur stayed until time for dinner. They went out together, shyly, to a little down-town French place, where the food, at forty cents with red wine, was execrable, and where they talked on with the incessant, tireless familiarity of two starved souls just off a desert island.

To young Howard, it was the hap-

piest Sunday—or, rather, day—he had spent in New York. The events of it revolved in a pleasant haze through his mind as he was dropping off to sleep that night. Agnes Salisbury was a new venture, a hitherto unexplored country, a discovery even, to him. The careless, unexpected, self-reliant life she represented attracted and repelled, and by its very repelling power attracted him the more. "They do that sort of thing—girls do—nowadays," thought he, conciliating the horror his mother would have of her. "It's awfully plucky of her, and rather splendid—of course—she's different from other girls—but she's a good fellow—I don't like her painty clothes—but—and I wish—she—didn't smoke—cigarettes."

And Arthur slept.

Such a situation, once defined and given a logical reason for development, offers to the acute observer but a limited number of solutions, and these, roughly, can be put under the gossipy heads, proper and improper. And, that there may be no mistake in determining beforehand the right cataloguing for our story, let us understand Agnes Salisbury.

With a little money and a slender talent, she had frequented for two years the Art Students' League. Her utter distaste for the conventional rules of good drawing, and her ill-directed passion for blazing color schemes and the symbolic expression of art previously referred to, hampered her utilitarian worth in the artistic field. Thus, when she left the classes of the school, she did it with heretic relief, and, defiantly, took a cheap studio on a street of which a certain stage-entrance was the most respectable doorway in the block. And from this dwelling, no persuasion of her few friends could dislodge her. The alien nature of her artistic conceptions, the shocking reputation of her street number, and the apparent carelessness of her mental and physical conditions, all combined to keep her aloof from her fellow-men. It is not now necessary to enter upon her early

history; it is enough to say that she was a good girl, as the world defines that term, utterly without knowledge of men, or women, or—herself. But she “took care of herself” in a competent, irresponsible way, the very innocence of which subjected her to untoward comment.

As we have said, Aggie liked young Howard from the first. She liked his crinkling smile, and the earnest, if somewhat constrained, expression of his gray eyes; his crisp, curling yellow hair delighted her, the slight aquiline hint to his nose, his blushing cheeks, his rapid, incoherent speech, his hesitating grasp for the right word—the right thought, the right implication—his clean, neat mind, and his clean, neat clothes that sat with an unmistakable college style on his athletic body—they, too, delighted her. She began to make symbolic sketches of him as Sir Galahad and St. George, and St. John the Beloved. He posed willingly, and, if he never recognized himself, poor lad, in the ultimate product, he attributed it humbly to his crass ignorance of art and the subtlety of the symbolism.

After the posing, which occurred every Sunday afternoon, was over, they read together—at least, Aggie read to Arthur—they were Aggie and Arthur to each other now—from D’Annunzio. The passages she selected made him uncomfortable; they upset his judgment, and confused his preconceived values. He had no philosophy, and a thing to him was right because he had been taught it was right; therefore, he was unprepared to accept doctrines he dimly resented even though they were read by Aggie from a book—and he had no idea of a more authoritative source. Occasionally, he brought along a volume of Sherlock Holmes, or Mr. Dooley, or a George Ade fable, and the reading of these marked for him an utterly contented afternoon. But he failed to observe that Aggie cared rather less for these than for D’Annunzio—she had no sense for modern humor.

There were always the unwholesome tea and talk, toward twilight.

Over the cigarettes, for he smoked oftener now, they talked of *his* college days, *his* mother, *his* work, *his* theatre-goings, *his* temptations in a big city—in fact, Aggie found it suited him better to keep her own strivings and strugglings out of the conversation. It was hard for him to master them, try as faithfully as he would.

They became adept in scenting new, out-of-the-way, cellar restaurants; and, when Aggie discovered a grubby little hole on Seventh avenue—thirty-five cents “with”—it was a gala Sunday for the two.

Howard’s intimacy with Aggie, born of lonely living, and never from the first with the slightest suggestion of anything more compelling than the mutual, one might almost say domestic, interchange of confidence and regard, was a tremendous boon. He had put it in a class by itself—since it did not accord with any inherited or carefully inculcated belief—and, thus sheltered, it grew, and expanded, and finally settled into an habitual pleasure.

With Agnes Salisbury, the conditions which obtained with Arthur—which, logically, should have obtained with her—brought about an utterly different resultant. For Aggie, in the end as in the beginning, was a woman.

It was while she was at work upon a large canvas—an inception of Lohengrin and Arthur—one Monday morning, that the truth flashed over her. Her face grew hot; she was almost faint. She put it away from her, this thought, and worked on feverishly with nervous, crimson sweeps of her brushes. But the mark was on her brain—if it is to the brain that such secrets come. Frightened and tremulously smiling, she ceased working—her hands shook absurdly—and sank into the old steamer-chair. The sun streamed through the dusty skylight in dancing, infinitely-particled rays upon her; her cat purred indulgently; over the shabby little top-floor studio settled a cheerful warmth that was like a sudden realization of rest and home.

“Oh!” murmured Aggie, with a

slow, strange comprehension; and, "oh!" again, with a little terror of joy at her heart.

Carefully, with the delicate precision of the loving, she collected her memories—too near and secure to be called memories—of Arthur. They slipped through the fingers of her mind like fine chains set with brilliants, topazes, sapphires, and merged into one shining strand. Chance acts, chance words, chance glances, took on patent meanings—she read them all large through the magnifying glass of love.

"Oh!" she laughed, and this time it was with the abandonment of herself to the truth, the uncalculating bliss of loving Arthur Howard.

The days until the next Sunday were to Aggie but spaces, clear spaces, of deep feeling, great exaltation. It never occurred to her, even once, that to Arthur the same emotions might be utterly unakin, might, at least, be kept apart in reserve for another woman not yet known to him. Every morning, she kissed, at first shyly, later boldly, his cigarette-case that he had left in the studio. She bought a little white collar with lace frills, unexpectedly becoming to her, and a pair of slippers with bows and extravagant French heels that seemed to cry out for the silk stockings she added the next day. And, when Sunday did come, she put her finery on, and thrust, with latent grace, a pink rose into her thick, yellowish hair.

"Why, Aggie, how—" Howard stood on the threshold, hesitating—"how—what—why, how *nice* you look!"

Aggie laughed, consciously. The indefinable festivity of the occasion seized them both. Everything was a jest to them; even Arthur's obvious puns delighted Aggie, and, when he proposed putting paper boots on the cat, she consented willingly, and nearly drove the staid animal insane with her teasing. Arthur became confused. The pink in Aggie's cheek, the rose in her hair, the frills, the slippers—these adornments seemed suddenly to put his relations with her on a new basis. It was like knowing other girls—the

college girls he used to take to promenades and teas. Their serious intimacy of confidence and aim and hope had vanished. Bewildered, and, almost against his will, stimulated and attracted, he watched the new spectacle of a playful, coquettish Aggie. He wondered why she had never appeared this way before. She was pretty—almost, he thought.

Arthur was slow at thinking out reasons for changes. Indeed, he had never before had the need for so doing; and he could not now begin. She swept him along by the free play of a personality, untried hitherto, and unknown both to him and to her. If he had dared, he might have suspected the truth. Such truths are the conceit of all men; but Arthur was too chivalrous, too much of a friend to Aggie, to impute love where he himself thought none.

"By Jove!" he laughed, in echo of her laugh, "you're awfully good fun today, Aggie. I—don't know what I'd have done without you here in New York. It's— isn't it?—jolly to be such good friends. You know, you're a bully friend to me."

"Am I not?" she laughed back. "It is nice to be—friends—while it lasts."

"While it lasts? Why, Aggie! It will always last—with *us*." He was serious, but she would have none of it.

"Will it, *will* it, now? Who knows?"

"I know," he insisted, eagerly.

"Do you?" she questioned, with sudden softness of speech.

For a moment, he was perturbed. But the sense of their former security reassured him.

"That rose looks mighty cute over your ear," he began anew. "Pink is your color."

Aggie's heart sang within her. He had noticed, then. "Don't you wish you had it—to wear on your coat?" she dared.

"On my heart," he threw back, gaily, "for always."

"Silly!" she languished.

"I could get it, too," asserted Arthur, daring in his turn.

"How, Mr. Confident?"

"I'll show you how!" And he sprang quickly toward her, his hands outstretched. She fled from him.

Over the chairs, about the tables, into corners and out, they ran and leaped, eluding each other elaborately to prolong the contest. At last, flushed, breathless, exhausted, really pretty now in her girlish confusion, Aggie gave up and waited for the conqueror. He came.

"There," he cried, snatching the rose, "I told you!" Her hair escaped from its confining black ribbon; in modest blushes she put her hands to her face.

Arthur did not know how it happened, though it is not inexplicable; but, with new impulses in his veins, he kissed her.

"Oh!" Aggie whispered, with closed eyes; "oh, Arthur!" and waited, tumultuously, for the great moment in her life had come; waited until the silence hurt her, and she slowly raised her head.

Howard stood awkwardly before her, his face suffused with hot waves of shame, and his clear, gray eyes contracted with the fear of her scorn and resentment—for he had betrayed the sacredness of their friendship.

He began, stammeringly, "Oh, Aggie—I—I—" She smiled at him with pathetic reassurance, but he misunderstood.

"Don't be angry," he pleaded, piteously. "You're not angry? Say you're not."

"No—I'm not—angry, Arthur," she answered, with slow timidity.

Again, he failed of the truth. His superb boyishness absolved her, utterly.

"Oh, you're good to say that, Aggie. I—I—" but he could get no farther. Aggie put out her hand, and he took it, unresponsively. He was possessed with a feeling that he wanted to be out of it, to get away; the air was charged with something he could not understand, something electric. With a boy's impatience of a sentimental scene, his manner changed and became almost abrupt. That Aggie had had no experience in matters of this sort

only increased the complications for her. Since she knew not what to expect, she could formulate no plan of action. The numb feeling in her breast was, in its essence, disappointment, but she believed it to be maidenly reserve. "All men," thought she, "all good men are like this in the first presence of their great love."

She looked at him, questioningly, and, as she looked, her momentary prettiness in his eyes faded. After a long silence, in which the two stood hand in hand, after the fashion of boys and girls in a kissing game, she walked irresolutely over to her easel, and selected a brush.

"You want to work?" he gasped, eagerly. "I—I'd better go."

With a tenderness which he believed due to Aggie, rather than felt by himself, Arthur bade her good-bye.

"I'll come again soon, and we'll have a long talk," he said in farewell. "You do forgive me?"

"Oh, yes," Aggie answered, rather wearily.

After a night of sleepless joy and despondency, things came right for Aggie. So sure was she of her own love, and so desirous of it, that she gave over questioning her heart, and subsided into the blind relief of faith in Arthur and the ultimate fruition of her hope. That he might not fret his spirit over what he might foolishly call his fault of yesterday, she wrote him a line, to show him how ready she was to take his honorable love. It read: "Aggie puts her hand in yours, dear Arthur, and is content."

Then she waited, patiently.

Howard found the note on his table when he came home from the bank. For the first time then, after its reading, he guessed—not accurately, to be sure, for his modesty forbade the thought that Aggie was in love with him. But, as the conviction grew, so grew his apprehension and alarm and regret. He became so distressed after an hour of futile accusation and hedging that he seized his hat, and rushed distractedly into the street.

It was the one chance in a thousand possibilities that sent Mr. Burleigh across his path. That he should ask the boy of Agnes Salisbury was the inevitable in their limited range of subjects for talk. Arthur's misery was so much greater than his shyness of Burleigh, and his habits of confiding so fixed, that two minutes had not elapsed before the tale began to leak out into the older man's ear.

Burleigh caught its bearing with an ease too facile for sympathy.

"Good God, my boy, don't tell it here—come to my rooms!" he protested.

Once under a friendly shelter, Arthur honestly loosed the flood-gates of incident. Burleigh heard him with mixed wonder that any mind could compass such a condition of total recall of word and act, and a certain worldly sorrow for Aggie.

"Poor Aggie!" he said, under his breath, as his eyes took in the undeniably handsome young fellow. Howard had just read Aggie's note aloud. He caught the commiseration of the older man.

"Then, you think, sir—?" he asked with almost an accent of awe.

"Think, sir?—it's evident—the girl's in love with you."

"But what—what can I do?" There were tears of regret and chagrin in Arthur's eyes.

"Do?"—Burleigh was abrupt—"do?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'm hanged if I know. Poor little Aggie!"

They continued to sit before the fire in silence, Arthur smoking the beginnings of a dozen cigarettes, and throwing them away, Burleigh chewing an unlighted cigar.

Burleigh broke the silence, sharply.

"Didn't you know? Didn't you see it coming?"

Arthur understood him. "No," he said, humbly.

"Were you never in—that is, haven't you cared for a girl before?"

"No," Howard hesitated; "no—I—haven't thought much—about girls—except, you know, as friends."

"Oh!"

A sense of undeserved guilt hung on the boy. When Burleigh's spaniel came up and thrust a cold nose affectionately into Arthur's hand, his throat choked, painfully. It was the only friendly thing, human thing, even, in the whole wretched evening.

"I was so alone!" he said, abruptly.

Burleigh softened toward him. "Look here, Howard, you go home. Don't worry over it, though heaven knows it's an awkward thing. I'll see Aggie—er—myself, and perhaps—" He hesitated, and then put his last question, curtly: "You're sure you don't love her?"

The boy blushed over his painful, unchivalrous admission. "No—I'm sorry, sir—I—only as a friend, sir."

"Ah!"

Burleigh gave him a hand. "I believe you. Now, good night. I'll see Aggie—myself—and let you know. Good night—good night." And the end of a long musing before his dying fire brought Burleigh back to but three words: "Poor little Aggie!"

Agnes, staring hopelessly out over a forest of grimy chimney pots of a late afternoon, heard Burleigh's knock with a throb of eager anticipation. Every knock, every step, nowadays, suggested Arthur's coming. It had been a week since she had had word from him. She answered the more readily for this reason: "Come!"

"Mr. Burleigh!"

He was unusually kind as he pressed her hand. "Aggie!"

The room grew very dark and a little chilly—it was early Spring—as they talked on of trivial things, each holding back, cautiously.

Burleigh, after a noticeable silence, began in a softened tone: "Aggie, I have never told you that I loved your mother—long ago—ages ago." She raised her eyes with a keen look, and nodded.

"She was a wonderful girl. We—we were tremendous friends from the first—friends. I was very young then, and she was a beautiful woman—you don't remember her, do you?—a

beautiful woman. I don't recall just when it was, but one day I knew that I loved her more than as the friend—it came to me very suddenly. And I went to her house to—to tell her. She had just come back from a visit to her aunt's—I can see her now as she looked that day—I could scarcely keep from putting my arms about her as she came into the room—that was in the Spring, too. She spoke of our recent separation, our comradeship, our great understanding of each other, and then she told me of her engagement to your father, whom she had met on her visit. I never told her of my love—she never knew—I think she never knew of it. If I could have married her—he smiled, kindly—"you would not see me the dusty old bachelor I am to-day. There never has been a woman like your mother—for me."

He waited till she might speak.

"Why do you tell me this, now?" she asked, coldly. "No, you needn't answer—I think I know. It is a parable—for me." She added, sharply: "You have seen him?"

Burleigh nodded. Aggie laughed in a hard, restrained tone.

"Mr. Burleigh, since this is the night for confessions, I will tell you what you have come to find out. You will not think me what people call a nice girl, afterward. Arthur has seen you, and

told—I don't care what. No—wait. All I have to say is this—I played with him. I did all I could to make him fall in love with me, just to amuse myself, and teach him something of life and women—all girls do it, and why shouldn't I? Just because I am shut up here in a garret, is that a reason why I'm to be done out of the things that girls—all girls, I say, do? I wanted to make him care for me; I wanted to *flirt*. I don't mean things that are horrid—but—but I wanted a little fun. You may hate me if you like—I care nothing for him as—as—you and he seem to think I care."

She had spoken passionately, defiantly, and now she rose from her chair, and stared again out of the window. In the shadow, she was only a deeper shadow against the panes.

Burleigh came up to her, and laid his hand on her shoulder. She was trembling, violently.

"I do not hate you, my dear girl; I—understand—and I'll tell Howard what you have said." She turned wonderingly toward him. He continued, "No, no, don't say anything more to-night. Some time—after this—you will think, perhaps, of my poor little story—and want me to come to you. Send for me."

He went away very quietly, for she was sobbing pitifully by the window.

"Poor little Aggie!" he murmured.



HIS ECCENTRICITY

"PECULIAR person, isn't he?"

"Oh, very! He still has his appendix."



WOMAN loves a man more for his redeeming vices than for his besetting virtues.

A PROGNOSTICATION

“I NEXT call your attention, ladies and gentlemen,” some dime-museum lecturer of the future may reasonably be expected to say, in tones admirably adapted for declamatory purposes, “to the most remarkable curiosity ever placed on exhibition—the petrified shell, or crust, of a man, entirely filled with a dry, semi-flaky, hemi-filamentous substance, more or less resembling excelsior, or bran.

“This remarkable relic was discovered, a few months ago, by workmen who were digging a cellar on the farm of Deacon Zadoc Tarsatter, three miles northeast of Nishnabotna, Indiana. At first, it was thought to be a petrified hired man, who had gone to sleep, some prehistoric evening, and hadn’t found out yet that it was time to get up. But, upon accidentally fracturing him, while prying him out, the finders were amazed to discover that he was a mere shell of petrification, stuffed with a desiccated substance apparently as mal-nutritious as choppings from a superannuated whisk-broom. The hired-man theory was, perforce, abandoned, for, as is well known, the hired man of all time has been a meat-eater.

“Scientists soon became interested in the matter, and, for a season, discussions as to the identity of the deceased waxed high; one learned man from Ann Arbor was severely slapped on the wrist by a pugnacious pundit from the State University of Arkansas. At length, however, the decision was reached that the remains were those of what might be paradoxically called the sole defunct survivor of the great health-food epidemic which prevailed in this country in the early Nineteen-hundreds. Analysis proved that the late gentleman’s upholstery was composed of a conglomerated mixture of the cereal fodders of that time. How he became petrified has not yet been determined; but that he was so for quite a while before his demise is evident, for it seems certain that no one but a petrified man could have survived such a diet long enough to have filled up on it.

“The health food of those days was, as therapeutical authorities tell us, a most deleterious and insidious substance, being merely a puerile, but wonderfully deceptive, imitation of something to eat, made wholly to sell. Its habitual use induced melancholia, misanthropy, agnosticism, gastric stigmatism, financial stringency, and a low, febrile yearning to become a missionary, an elocutionist, a poet, a philatelist, a newspaper humorist, or something equally superfluous, culminating eventually in idolatry, the victim falling down and abjectly worshiping his own stomach. The rum demon was a mere paltry amateur, adolescently dribbling his petty pudding-and-milk on his bib, as compared with the health-food fiend. For the drunkard there was hope and help, but none for the health-food sot. After the first few doses entered him, naught but health food would satisfy his awful cravings. He grew wan and petulant, his reason became impaired, and he was irresistibly impelled to tell everybody who would listen what the infernal stuff had done for him, and to tempt others to partake of the diabolical concoctions which were rapidly sapping his vitality and robbing him of his gastric-fluid. He was shunned by his former friends, and left alone with his favorite fodder, to go his peevish way down to a health-food sot’s miserable grave. Thus, in all probability, perished the poor, petrified party before us.

“Now, friends, if you will kindly step this way, I will call your attention to

the latest mechanical triumph of the illustrious inventor, Edison IV., the wonderful Automatic Philanthropist. You slide a nickel into the slot, grasp the handles, close your eyes, and receive a heart-and-conscience-stimulating glow which penetrates to the remotest ramification of your being, and gives you a sensation which lasts for twenty-four hours, making you feel all the time as if you had just given one thousand dollars to some worthy charity, and had ten thousand dollars more that you could throw away if you wanted to. A whole day's placid satisfaction for five cents!"

TOM P. MORGAN.



MUCH THE SAME

HE—Do you suppose, after we are married, we'll get tired of each other?

SHE—Why not? We might.

"But how do you know? You've never been married."

"No—but I've been engaged!"



ALAS!

"WILL you let me kiss you?"

They sat side by side in the gloaming, quite close to each other, yet not so close but that it might have been possible to be closer. The sun had gone down behind the western hills, and the faint shadow of twilight was beginning to suggest itself in the recesses of the hills.

He was patient. He said to himself, he would wait.

She did not answer, but looked out into the clear sky and the fleecy clouds as they sailed along the horizon. Of what was she thinking, he wondered, as he sat there. Was it of love and passionate longings, and desires fully met? But never mind what it was, he would not hurry her. He would wait.

The distant call of the owl was heard, and along the lane in the distance came a procession of cows, home from the pasture.

For a long time they sat thus, in deep silence, until she turned her eyes to his, wondering, questioning.

"Well?" he asked at last. "Will you?"

And she gathered herself up and prepared to leave.

"It is too late—now!" she said.



THEY ARE PLENTIFUL

"A HAS-BEEN, isn't he?"

"No; merely a thinks-he-was."